

# CINEMA

## Papers



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**Abra Cadabra 3D Supplement**  
**Sydney Pollack Dusty**  
**May-June 1983**  
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# To Gethin Creagh the ideal dubbing environment has no walls.

**Gethin, I believe you started as a sound recordist in New Zealand. How did you get into the business?**

Right from a young age I wanted to be in radio, not in film at all. As a kid it was all about radio stations that I saw at the radio stations. From secondary school I went straight on to a traineeship with the NZBC. I graduated to an audio studio first of all, then on to outside location recording local news and current affairs. Actually when they first put me into TV I was quite upset. I thought I'd never get to sound

**You came to Australia in 1969. Is that right?**

Yes, I didn't think the location was big enough in New Zealand and I thought everything was bigger and better in Australia.

I took one summer year to get into the industry. They wouldn't accept me at first. Finally I got a job as a sound engineer for ABC. It was the days of "the audio mob" when, as they used to call it, with Phil Holdeman. Next came the ABC and I was into proper dubbing suites. A good friend, Norm McDonald, obviously saw something in the way I worked so he put me on the desk on their old "Western Magazine". It was there I first met my teeth on mixing.

**Your primary interest at that stage, was it in the field or in mixing?**

It was still in the field. I was transferred to Robert in the field but also mixing a little bit.

Then I decided to go to London and I went freelance for the ABC, sound recording all over Europe. When I got back to Sydney a year later I needed a job. They said, "well the only one's missing. How about you run for us for a year and we'll see?" And so I did. I worked with Allen Allen, which the grandfather of masters around town. I shared the number 2 dubbing suite at Gore Hill with him. After a year I said, "well, when am I going sound recording?" They said, "Can you

do another year for us?" And so I did that. After a while I realised that I liked it where I was and I didn't want to go out into the field.

**When did you first start work on features?**

It was three or four years later. The ABC had put in a new dubbing theatre, the old Artman Park. When Allen retired he presented me with the keys to the place and I worked there for a year until I got a call from Peter Perston at United Sound. Once again I'd run out of income so I left the ABC to work at United on feature movies, which is where I had wanted to head for some time.

**Do you recall the first feature you did?**

For my first two features I didn't know what country I was in. The first one was called *Mumbo*. It was from New Guinea and it was in Pidgin English. The next one was *Marguerite*, which had some English but was mostly Aborigine. Since that time I suppose I've done twenty five or twenty six features.

**Which of those are especially memorable to you?**

Oh, I think *Heaven* working with Phil Noyce. We had a great time doing that and I loved the movie. I think it's fantastic and it's particularly good fun to work with. Her sort of person who can draw it all out of you. You're sitting there sweating away giving your all and he's asking for more. You do it for him willingly but it's exhausting work.

**Is there any sound track you're particularly pleased with?**

The ones I'm really pleased with are the recent ones. *Goodbye Paradise* is an excellent track. The *Prize Money* was another good track. *Dead Easy* is another one, and *Captain Incredible* is another good one. They're all good fun

**How long have you been with Colorfilm?**

Like the dubbing theatre I'm only new to Colorfilm. It was originally going to be a screening theatre, however it was decided to go into sound. We've only really been operating since just after Christmas.

**What are you working on at the moment?**

Our next Australian feature is *Witch of Jorral*, directed by Mark Egerton which will be in stereo. There will be a Malaysian feature before that which will be the first one in stereo out of South-East Asia.

**How do you define your role as a mixer?**

We always thought the actual technique of mixing is only half the job. We watched other mixers at work and it always seems to be how you're handling the director and the editors. You've got to get consensus in that room. You can't come out with a grey decision and you're the one they're all looking to. You've got to produce the goods because very often they don't know exactly what they want and you've got to invent it.

**The dubbing theatre here at Colorfilm, which is like?**

It's fantastic. It's one of the only properly installed dubbing theatres that I've ever seen. The equipment is first class and it's put in the right way too. We can run more tracks than anybody else. We can lock in with time code material and we full in-track. We've got a Studer A800 24 track which is the Rolls Royce of multi track tape recorders which can lock into the system. We have one of the best dubbing suites around.

**In your opinion, what is the ideal set-up and the ideal conditions to produce the best possible quality?**

Plenty of feed back to the crew and your director and to your technical people. Lots of mixing. No side put on. A good technical backup is essential.

At one time the mixer knew how everything worked right down to the last transistor. He doesn't anymore. You have to be too specialised so you're always talking to your maintenance department to keep quality control up. And of course talking to your director for artistic direction.

**What about physically?**

Good ergonomics. Well placed equipment so you can get to it otherwise you get fatigued. A good monitoring system otherwise you're cheating yourself. Also you can get sound fatigue if you're working with equipment which is below par, you're straining blind, like the cameraman not looking through the eyepiece, just guessing. And good coffee.

**How close do Colorfilm come to providing you with these ideal conditions?**

Well they're pretty well there now.

**Finally Gethin, Why Colorfilm?**

I was waiting for that. I was going to say because Hollywood didn't ring. Well, I'm most impressed with the technical backup. If I ask for something to be done, a modification, like I did the other week when I was working on a feature I wanted a Muzer-Morra system and I had one within 24 hours. Which is pretty impressive. The technical backup here is amazing. The company wants to get into the sound side. They have made that to me. And if they get into something they usually make sure they're the leaders in it. Their unofficial projections into the future are good. It's an expanding company with good back-up and you get a fair deal. They're to remain with them.

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# Sydney Pollack

Interviewed by Tom Ryan and Scott Murray



*The films of Sydney Pollack concern individuals going through a process of learning, about themselves and their "raids." Often they are helped in this process by their sexual partners.*

*Pollack's Bobby Deerfield is one example. Bobby (Al Pacino) is a racing car champion who is afraid of life, too scared of stepping outside his self-contained shell for fear of exposing himself emotionally. But through his relationship with Lilian (Marthe Keller), he is taught, as Lilian writes to him, "Life is made sweeter by taking a risk."*

*By the end of the film, Bobby has opened himself out emotionally, letting the more sensitive side of his personality emerge. He has also realized that one cannot cut oneself off from one's roots, and that one is strengthened by understanding the part family plays in life. A moving example is when Bobby gives as his address (to some fellow American tourists) that of his little-visited family home.*

*In many ways, Bobby's sense of growth and increased sense of personal freedom conveys Pollack's belief in the importance of individual struggle. In *Absence of Malice*, Michael Gallagher (Paul Newman) fights the injustice of a false newspaper story and takes on the newspaper itself. He does not allow himself to be daunted by the corporate's oppression and impersonal might, and his victory is that of the individual over the institution.*

*So, even if Pollack's films often end in the pining of lovers through chance or death, there is always a strong sense of each individual's having grown through the process. Pollack is a fiercely optimistic filmmaker who sees nothing to be lost in taking a risk. As Bobby says of his brother, "He's kind of a golden fool." "cept he tries."*

S.M.

*Left: director Sydney Pollack and actor Dustin Hoffman (above) in *Baruch* among the *Admiral of France**

You have done a lot of work in television and in many of your films there seems to be a critical attitude towards it. Hubbard Ganssler (Robert Redford) in "The Way We Were" is shown to have copied out at the end when he has become a writer for television, while "Tootsie" is clearly a parody of certain kinds of television. How much is this a product of your own experience?

It is partially that, and partially an attack on the travesty I think television has become in the U.S. At one time there was real progress for television, now I don't think there is. Apart from the public broadcasting system, where private stations and public do some interesting programming, some television is crap.

At the time I was working in television it represented the ultimate compromise. You had to have commercial breaks, or the network had a different philo-

sophy from the star, or you couldn't hurt someone because he was too far to the left of the paper product that was sponsoring the show. You were always frustrated by something.

But even then good things were possible. On *Ben Casey*, I did almost every other show in the first two years and some of them were quite good. Even they were cancelled shows done in five days, there is some pretty damn interesting stuff visually, and some nice performances and writing. But television has become silly now, and can't help but be a little satirical in my attitude to it as film.

It is also connected to a broader view of the problems produced by institutions? You attacked the media in "Absence of Malice" and in "The Electric Bluebird". There is the CIA in "Three Days of the Condor" and the ambiguity about "The New York Times" in it as if in your films institutions are

constantly threatening that action of the individual which is clearly as important to you. . . .

Institutions do constantly threaten and frustrate the individual. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy and you can't get around it. That disturbs me.

I am part of this institutionalization now in the film business. There isn't any *film business*. There's Coca-Cola, there's Gulf and Western, there's the Texas American Corporation. The only one really left is Marvin Davis who owns Twentieth Century-Fox, for which he previously paid these \$500 salaries to cash. He's an old man, but at least he is one man. If I wanted to, I could go and face Marvin Davis and have the satisfaction of yelling at him, but you can't argue with an institution.

It is like living in an institution. It is like trying to argue with an airline. There isn't anybody who can do you any good because they are all working for somebody else. Nobody takes any personal responsibility. "But, you don't understand, I have my ticket." "Well, I'm sorry sir. Your ticket have been sold to somebody else." "But who do I see about that?" That is a line I have often used in my pictures. It started in *The Property of Caesar*, and was in *Three Days of the Condor*. Buddy Dreyfuss and Absence of Malice.

When there isn't anybody to see, you are in trouble, and there isn't anybody to see with institutions because institutions aren't anybody. We glorify experience and police familiar institutions.

One might look for personal relationships to provide a refuge from these institutions. Yet in almost all your films you separate your lovers at the end, as if they have to go off alone and face the world again. The exception is "Tootsie". . . .

Yes, *Tootsie* is the most optimistic film so far, but even there I

couldn't quite bring them together as it was originally written, with them embracing and walking off together.

Basically, I don't think there are any solutions. There is only the examination of themselves. There is no road to a journey, there is always another journey starting. But I do believe the alternative is personal relationships: they are the only refuge.

Personal relationships also have a dark side at their root because ultimately, and I hate to admit this, everyone is alone. The toughest things in the world you have to do alone: being born, dying, the gut level things you have to make in life, even in your career, even politically, to betray a friend or decide what is a moral move. There isn't any real refuge for your aloneness.

I don't mean to be as pessimistic as I sound, and I am very pro-relationships. I have been married for 25 years. I don't believe it is as difficult as people think it is. I think that we have, I don't know any other way to do it except to try. "But if it doesn't work, Sydney, why do you do it?" Because there isn't anything else. Finally, that is a good enough reason.

"Buddy Dreyfuss" is, arguably, your most complex treatment of the dangers and rewards of relationships. . . .

I'm glad you think that. The sort of it was the story of a man who faces death every day but knows nothing about life. He is taught about how to live by a dying woman who had this compulsion to give some meaning to her death.

The metaphor for me was in the story *Lilies* (Marthe Keller told about her father dying on the beach, and this hand sticking out underneath. They talk him over and find this child, and Keller says, "It was so strange because it was as if my father had died and in his dying had had the child, like as



Hubbard (Robert Redford) after having sold out to television meets Kate (Shirley Duvall) again at the end of Pollack's *The Way We Were*.



The couple in *Tootsie*. "Can't help but be a little satirical in my attitude on television on film."



Buddy (Lizzy Duvall) and Lizzy (Shirley Duvall) in Pollack's *Buddy Dreyfuss*, personal relationships in danger.



*Left, Lily Tomlin and Carlos del Monte, the island party, before they take "a journey" to Deerfield. Above, Lily Tomlin and Bobby Deerfield.*



*Lily Tomlin and Bobby Deerfield. "I've never, relationship-wise, had a first kiss. I've never had a first kiss (laughing) so here I do it. I have no other way to do it except to try it."*

age." And, of course, that is what she is doing: giving birth to Deerfield (Al Pacino).

There is a wonderful sparkling between Deerfield and Lily's peculiarity in their first meeting over dinner at the club. . . .

Yeah, it is an extraordinary scene. I love it. I love the fact that they have their backs to each other, and she has to turn around each time she talks. And I love that whole thing with the cigarette and how Deerfield tries to find out how he does the con trick. Deerfield can't stand anything he can't understand or understand. He has no idea what's going on. That is why he picked a job that justifies so much confidence. That is why the film opens with him without the racing track, he processes every step he is in order to take. That is why he always opens a question before answering, to give himself as much time as possible. "Where am I going?" "I'm going over there." "How are you?" "I'm fine."

You must have been disappointed by the general failure of "Bobby Deerfield" to win an audience. . . .

It didn't work anywhere, yet it is a favorite of mine.

I know you shouldn't defend films that fail, but I am stubborn about it. Everybody seems to have thought I was trying to make a one-jerked, but that's not what I was trying to do at all.

It was important to me that people at least recognized the ways in which the theme of Bobby Deerfield, race film, is terribly overstated, and which has been in all the pictures, although to a lesser degree than in Deerfield, is about roots. By that I mean people wandering away from where they belong, culturally, emotionally or physically. Bobby was a guy who cut himself off and, for whatever reasons, tried to deny who and what he really was. He assumed a constructed identity, which a lot of people do.

There are very few people who don't drift from their roots. At some time they encounter a teacher, a piece of literature or something that makes them believe that they have been doing it all wrong, and that they have to change. They move to San Francisco or New York or London. They start a whole new life. But it is like cutting a tree off and then replanting it: it is never as strong as when the original roots are left. Most people find themselves returning to home base.

Coming to terms with one's past, finding answers there, emerges as a major theme in most of your films. "Absence of Malice," Michael Gallagher (Paul Newman) tries to do things independently of his father's authority, but has to resort to them in the end. In "The Untouchables," Sonny Warden (Robert Redford) has betrayed his post and has to take a course back to it. . . .

Really. It is in all these films—and very much so in *The Yakuza*—but for some reason it seemed to work more forcibly for audiences in these films than in Deerfield. For me, Deerfield was the most perfect expression of these themes, but people either found it boring to watch a film about a boxing man, or were not prepared for Pacino in that kind of role after *Baywatch*. And because they expected more fireworks. . . .

In fact, you originally had Paul Newman cast as Bobby Deerfield, which would have made it a very different film. . . .

I don't think it would have been as true a film, but commercially it probably would have been more successful.

Newman was the first to try and get me to do it, because it was written for him by Alvin Karpis. We had a meeting down at Newman's beach house, and he really wanted to do it badly. But I had just made *The Yakuza*, which was a failure, so I checked out and did *Three Days of the Condor*. But

as soon as *Condor* was successful, I dug Alvin's screenplay out of my drawer and re-read it. I became totally fascinated.

You seem to have developed a very productive relationship with Karpis. . . .

Alvin and I have worked together on many films. He and David Rayfield, whom I first met when I was working in television, are the two guys with whom I work all the time—sometimes confused, sometimes not. They worked together on *The Way We Were*, totally uncredited. It was the first time I had been able to work with two writers at once, in the same room. The same thing happened on *The Electric Horseman*.

Alvin is a man who thinks of himself as missing life, a discontented man who is afraid to take a chance. He is about 54 years old, very youthful looking and very attractive. But he was locked for 27 years in a marriage. His wife was terrific, but he was afraid of her, but it was the wrong marriage for him. He knew it. He had a system in a room and typed all day long.

Actually, he has just re-married and his life is opening up beautifully. He's done Julia and *Ordinary People* and was there *Audrey Hepburn*. He is just blossoming.

Alvin writes very much out of his gut, but is disciplined enough as a craftsman to put it in a theatrical form. He writes fables about himself, but not narcissistic, autobiographical stuff. He also has a bizarre imagination. Only he could have written that crazy character, Carlos del Monte, the baldhead guy eating the spleen in Bobby Deerfield. Who is this guy who is eating bellows? I don't know. It doesn't make any sense in the world, except he is precisely the opposite to Deerfield. He is not where he belongs. He takes risks. He speaks to strangers, flies in the sky. He does all kinds of crazy things.

And in *The Electric Horseman* he came up with Gus (Walter

Connolly) who lived out by a trailer park. He is the subtle character in another guise.

You know, it was an interesting experience making Bobby Deerfield, because I was away from home, from my own room. We had a lot to Europe, in strange, strange places like Lucerne in Switzerland. Hospitals like that really mean, with doctors, health spas and everything.

Then we followed that journey, down the mountains to Belgrade and Lake Como. We stayed in the Villa Serbelloni, a strange place out of some European past. And here is this stylish American who is not connected to anything, and who is defined by whatever women he is with.

The women in the beginning, of course, was his mother, who first loved him tenderly from the world. And then there is Linda, played by Anne Dreyer, who was wonderful. I love it when he comes back down the mountain and Linda is waiting for him. "I will make you an omelette." "I don't want an omelette." "I will make you an omelette and I don't give a damn if you want an omelette."

I loved another line so much I used it again in *The Electric Horseman*: "Bobby, what will you do to me tomorrow?" "What because?" "What are you going to do tomorrow?" "It's the same question because that is finally the question." "What but all this means?" "What will I learn from all this?" And, of course, the characters in another case can really give a definitive answer. Something has been learned, but nobody can say precisely what it is.

So all your films are positive statements as the characters manage to grow because of their experiences?

They do grow. They grow by leaving home base and then returning different from when they started. T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets* has a line which is the most significant line for me—it's as easy well. "The purpose of all our wanderings is to arrive at the

point where we started and know it for the first time." That is exactly what happens to people in life.

Many of your characters have difficulty making decisions alone, and in part this reflects the loss of a parental guidance or presence: Bobby Derfield, Megan in "Absence of Mother", Michael and Julie in "The Way We Were". Julie in "Taste".

I think so. I have never thought of it quite like that, but you strike a note. You remind me of my past. I had almost no parental guidance and probably spent an awful lot of my childhood involved in things with an ambiguous nature, like trying to figure out why there are so many contradictory things. Why could it not be more simple?

My mother said when I was very young: My father was a criminal kind of a teacher, but more in terms of physical survival than in moral or philosophical terms. He was a very physical guy and it was more about using one's own will, of being an athlete. I could never speak to my father about anything philosophical.

One of the things I enjoy most in my life is sitting down and having long talks with my three kids — my two daughters particularly. They are very open with me about everything — philosophical questions, moral questions, whatever. My oldest daughter is a freshman in college now, and on the way to Europe recently I stopped in Denver just to talk her to dinner and ballet. It is something I missed when I was a kid.

The thing I am trying to teach her, if I can teach her anything, is that you don't need to have answers to feel secure, because most of the time the people with the answers are in as much trouble as anybody else. As Yogi said, "The best deal back centuries, the worst are full of passion and mystery."

I am very suspicious of "knowing." It is almost impossible to know anything. Yet all the time I run in experts and forgiveness, film critics who "know." But who the hell knows? How do you know so fast that this is right and this is wrong, or this is good and this is bad? It is hard to know anything and it gets harder as you get older and learn more. You face more and more moral ambiguities all the time. It would be wonderful if it were easy, like the way John Hoxman talks about the war he was in. He means "the territory, the clarity."

I am a Jew who took a great deal of pride in 1945 with the Israeli situation. Now I am in a very compromised moral position, given what is going on. It is very hard to know what is right. It would be wonderful to just have an allegiance to an idea and say that under no circumstances are we wrong.



John Hoxman (Paul Simon) and Julie (Fanny Ardant) in *The Way We Were*, one of the movies that made a point of understanding their context.

That is a small example, but it happens in life all the time. It happens in politics.

The problem with that, however, is that constant reflection probably stifles action.

That is exactly right. That is the dilemma in *The Way We Were* — you're so busy seeing every side that you take no side. When you are finally doing it, it's interesting somehow. I got furious with myself for making such a mistake. It's like a mistake, and that is reflected in the picture, too. That's why there is a great melancholy, because each of the people usually represents one point of view. And if I were to be the fullest, the contextual view that Hoxman/Gordian takes in *The Way We Were*, and then there is the fullest, the contextual point of view that Kate

Morley (Barbra Streisand) takes. Ultimately I can't ever keep them together. The differences are too great. They're irreconcilable.

Given that quote from John Hoxman, "Absence of Mother" seems like a warning for that kind of moral confusion because Michael makes it like a cowboy out of the West and rides off into the sunset at the end...

Yes. He's the guy who isn't morally ambiguous. He's not paralyzed by weighing arguments. "He's not fair," he says. He doesn't care whether it is an invasion or not. He says he can't give a newspaper! I mean, he can't talk to a newspaper, but he tries. It is a tragedy, but tragedy is the only way you can do it.

I did the best work in my life

when I didn't know what I couldn't do. It is knowing the limits that starts to cripple you. That is why filmmaking is a born out business, oddly. There are not a lot of old directors. And you have careers like Eli Kazan's and Billy Wilder's, and you wonder what happened. Why is it great, great, great and then stops? It stops because you begin to define your self too much. You begin to "know" or think you know. You can't keep that sense of not knowing when you can't do.

In your work there seems to be a constant concern with the feminine side of the male personality, and vice versa. It is clearly there in "Bobby Derfield", something Bobby has to learn about himself. Was it this aspect that interested you in "Taste"?

It was the only thing that interested me in *Taste*: the idea of a man growing and becoming a better man for having been a woman. I wasn't interested in doing a drag comedy. I wasn't interested in Doris Hoffman putting on a dress.

I think I have always been interested in this aspect without knowing it. It didn't organize until *Taste*, where I realized that the similarities between men and women may ultimately be more important than the differences. Friendship between men and women is tough, but it may ultimately be the answer to recognizing all these revolutions and revolutions we look at.

We look around and some guy says, to himself it is an incredible accomplishment. He's my best friend! And that's not usually what happens. Usually a guy has a guy as his best friend, and a girl has a girl and in the meantime the guy has a lover, a wife or whatever. There is a discontinuity in heterosexual relationships.

In the film I have done, particularly the early ones, the best one was the woman. She was alone and taught the man, it was with *The Shadow of a Doubt*, then *The Way We Were*, Bobby Derfield and *The Electric Blue*.

There is a sense, I suspect, that in modern culture has repressed that "feminine" is really a constant. If I asked any man to run the five most appealing qualities in a woman, not making anything physical, he would probably say things like patience, maturity, understanding, an ability to nurture and kindness. Now there is so much that they should be feminine qualities, no reason they shouldn't be in every man. They're human or human qualities.

Something very positive would happen if men learned more of their side of themselves and didn't feel compelled to elaborate over and over the macho side. There is something very good about emotion, about personal strength,



Megan (Fanny Ardant) the teacher, and Michael (Paul Simon), the student, "The Way We Were".



about stamina and the ability to handle stress, and all the things that we think of as strong qualities. But it is always harder if it is compared with inner strength.

I have played around with that theme a lot. I remember Lillian saying in *Bobby Deerefield* that she had her hands like her father, it's not wrong to have the qualities of a woman — nice hands, delicate hands — that's saying so beautiful. And in *Babe* there is the relationship between these two women, which was not a homosexual relationship but a closeness. It was a relationship possible between two people.

Some of this sounds so pretentious so full, and I don't make it so, but (glad) I'd like to see you complained for me. I can't deal with it. But I know as sure as I am sitting here that the only way to deal with it is between two people, not between countries. Everything starts between two people, and it can be a man and a man, a man and a woman, or a woman and a woman. It doesn't matter. If things are right there, then you can't have war.

You know, people say, "Why don't you make political movies?" I do make political films. "Why don't you make social, philosophical movies?" Well, I do make very personal films, but in the form of big entertainment. That is the way to reach the maximum number of people — a lot more people than if I make a little tract piece with as easy in it, saying, "Don't drop nuclear bombs. It's not good for you." Everybody knows it's not good for you.

No, I can't do it that way, but I can make somebody cry genuinely or laugh or be sad or look for better treatment of a person. Even in its own odd way in *Tootsie*, you see the truth when Rita (Dorothy Callaway) says to Dorothy (Dorothy Hoffman) the same line that Michael (Hoffman) said to Jeff (Bill Murray) about, "Listen, I never told her that." You see the long so clearly and you know it's true. The audience laughs because they know it is the same damn thing that most guys say.

Now, you don't think you are learning something there, but it is an odd way, because you are not being lectured at, because you are not being mentored to, you are aware for a split second the truth of it all. It means some distance around in your head a little bit, a little crack opens. And that is all that is necessary for stories.

We have debated various readings of that sequence when Michael debriefs Julie's (Jessica Lange) "see" to her on the balcony. It seems to me that Michael wants to be successful, because she is likely to recognize the line . . .

All I meant at that point was that sometimes are okay when you are in control of them but nobody



Three images from *Terms of Endearment*: Jane Fonda and George C. Scott; Lili Fini Zanuck and George C. Scott; and Faye Dunaway and George C. Scott in a publicist's call of the film. From which the film "Terms of Endearment" is taken.



were all their fascinations about that. Women often have rape fantasies, but that doesn't mean they literally want to be raped. So, I was just dealing with the truth of that.

But, psychologically, I think you are accurate. Unconsciously, Michael wants to be found out right from the beginning. It is a lot easier work to tell a lie than it is to tell the truth.

There is another question about the male-female aspect, and it has to do with why you hold back from showing Julie and Dorothy kids . . .

They never kissed because Julie wouldn't permit it. Let's go back to the beginning. Jessica was devoted to Eli with Dorothy as if she were a man. If you watch closely, particularly in the scene where Julie returns her to the country, Jessica is playing it like she's flirting with a man. The reason for this is that otherwise I would have no love story. There is only one scene where they are a man and a woman, other than at the party, and that's when the whole film is over, and you are trying to wrap everything up. So somewhere they have to be in love with each other, even if she just doesn't know she's in love with him.

So, I figure psychologically I'm getting away with a little twisting of the bull by saying that something in Julie attracts the man in Dorothy. She giggles, but her eyes and lips, to the point where words of the people who saw the dailies said, "Hey man, you'd better be careful!"

Even in the scene where Dorothy almost kisses Julie, the wane of the last minute before pulling away, there's, at the very, "Obviously I had the same impulse too."

Now, I don't want her to literally be a lesbian because that is not what the picture is about. I don't want her not to be a lesbian, because that is not what the picture is about either. All I want her to do is be sensitive and vulnerable, and she is sensitive in that moment. She doesn't shoot at Dorothy and say, "How dare you!" or "Get out of here!" She says sensuously, "No, it's not your fault. It's my fault," the way you would if a misunderstanding like that happened. But still something in her is drawn to him.

So, I think unconsciously the audience gets a sense of what it would be like if they were together, rather than if she reacted only towards Dorothy as a woman. I had to create some sort of sexual tension between them, even though it is bizarre in the sense that, in a way, it is coming through the film.

Apparently, "Absence of Malice" was originally written for two male leads and you wanted one male changed to a woman. Given the kinds of relationships you have mentioned in "Julia" and pursued in "Fanny", why did you see a heterosexual relationship as necessary here?

I don't seem to be able to do a picture without a love story in it; it is the period with which I can write. In *Absence of Malice*, it was never two men. However, we did think of switching the roles, the man being the reporter and the woman the victim. The reason we couldn't do that was that you wouldn't believe a woman being suspected of Mafia dealings. So I didn't have much choice. Finally, except to make the victim the male so that the manipulation of his consciousness would be believable. But

father was Mafia, therefore he's Mafia; his father was cooked, therefore he's cooked.

How do you feel about the representation of Megan Carter (Sally Field) in the film?

Megan is not meant to be a great journalist. Megan is an average journalist, and I think she is a fairly accurate representation, at least in the U.S. She follows symptoms instead of facts, sometimes. I know that a good journalist wouldn't make a lot of the mistakes she does, but we have Pulitzer Prize journalists who have made quite mistakes.

I was very careful before I did that picture. I sent people to the Columbia Journalism School to research every instance of journalistic malfeasance. I could find I accused myself that there were presidents at least a hundred times over for every mistake made in that picture. And I documented it all. Plus, I had an excellent Pulitzer Prize-winning editor of the *Denver Free Press* in a writer (Karl Lavach).

As well as the question of whether or not she accurately represents journalists, there is the question of her function as a woman. When Michael leaves her up after Teresa's suicide, it is as if she has been manipulated into being hostile to her rather than to the institution . . .

For enough. But my only point is that finally, the institution, and this is the story of it, is the people. I don't want to stop the first part and I don't want to censor journalists, but I want to say, "Hey, you guys, you have to do a better. I'm sorry, but if you have that kind of responsibility, you

have to do it better." The answer is to be a little more careful about whom you give the byline to in a newspaper, because that's a big factor.

It is the same as whom you let make the picture. If I made pictures which were out and out propaganda, I think I would be doing a very important thing. It's not a fair attack to give me \$11 million, they spend \$35 million more making this product and let me say anything I want, if I'm not a moral man. I had to watch like hell on *Three Days of the Condor* to let Robert (Jeff Goldblum) and Jackson (John Cazale) have their day in court. Otherwise, it's not fair. Higgins has to say, "You can take this moral position because you're eating, you're not hungry and you're not freezing cold. But when you're freezing and your car won't start and there's no food in your stomach, what are you going to want then?" I have to leave you on that note because that's another wrinkle.

Now, I very much want to say certain moral, positive things in pictures, but I can't put my hand on the scale and overbalance it. That's cheating.

In "Fanny", George Fennell (Dorothy Finkelstein) tells Michael why he hasn't the part in a new play. "Terry Bishop is in soap opera. Everybody knows his name." One could look at the ending of your film and say that you owe something to that effort. You have used Sidney Poitier, Redford five times, Bart Lancing twice, Paul Newman, Robert Mitchum, Jane Fonda twice, Sally Field, Barbara Stanwick, Faye Dunaway, Al Pacino — all big names. To what extent do you have your eye on the box-office?



Jessica Walters is playing it like she's flirting with a man. Otherwise I would have no love story. Poitier



Ryan and Michael in *Absence of Malice*. "I don't seem to be able to do a picture without a love story in it, it is the period with which I can write."



The use of his name prior: Ryan Redford in *Stacy in Valley of the Giants* (Dorland)

This is a tricky point because it is very misunderstood. People believe that there are less office guarantees with stars. That's a bit of a myth because there are only one or two stars who are guaranteed: Clint Eastwood might as a rule, and Steve and Goldie Hawn as a female Redford is a sure guarantee of anything Redford made. *The Great Escape*, *Breaker - The Great Gatsby*, *Breaker - The Great Gatsby*, *Breaker - The Great Gatsby* — a lot of pictures that haven't earned their money. So Jim Newman. He had made nothing but flops between 1970 and when I said he is a *Man of Malice*. But those people bring a history into the screen with them, an unconscious sense of unconscious from which you can't dissociate them, and which we work very favorably for you.

Take the *Man of Malice* character in *Malice*, I had to be very careful when I cut at the hip. I wanted to be as ambiguous as I could, so I needed a sympathetic lady to do these unimpeachable things. I certainly didn't want Faye Dunaway because it would have been a nightmare.

Sally Field is a sympathetic lady the minute she shows her face on screen because of *Norma Rae* and because of the fact that she's had to fight against the system to become recognized as a good actress.

Newman also has a past. You can believe him taking on that newspaper. There is something old-fashioned about him, he comes out of old-fashioned films. It would have been wrong for, say, Richard Gere.

*The Way We Were* would have been quite different if I'd had Ryan O'Neal instead of Redford. As originally written, the film was

a vehicle for the woman. My work was to try to level that argument out, and one of the ways was to cast someone who could pull his weight on screen with Streisand. And when Redford would be asked, you automatically know you are dealing with an intelligent man. That is not necessarily true with Ryan O'Neal. He is a good actor, don't get me wrong, but the intellectual association is not intelligent.

With Julie in *Twelve*, a kind of special shorthand lets you know right away that she is the leading lady instead of Stacy (Tim Garry). It was very wrong because you could be confused: Stacy's is the better written part. This is the clever relationship. Would people think that the love story is Michael and Stacy? Well, I had to cut it so they would know the movie the two men that the love story belongs to Michael and Julie.

So, casting is very critical. It is not done to much for money, although you have probably a lot better chance of financing if you cast Streisand and Redford instead of unknowns. But misguided against that, it is you have today a \$30 million film with the two stars as opposed to a \$10 million film with unknowns. So you have to ask: will I get 100 million back with the two of them to pay for the extra \$20 million? It's a trade-off.

In your previous *Chicago Papers* interview, you talked about visual style in terms of catching the performance. We would like to shift the focus away from that. To what extent do you consciously be visual patterns to describe content?

You always try to. Visual style always works that when it comes out of some organic idea. Each scene has an idea if you want to push it to the wall. You ask, what is the scene really about? Eventually, that will lead you to background, and to a visual style. You always try to link a scene emotionally. "This is the scene where Michael gets the worst news of his life." You don't try to explain the story as, "This is a scene where Michael comes and talks to his agent and finds out nobody will ever hire him." That won't give you anything. But "This is the scene where Michael gets the final blow of bad news to an already bad life. He's had his 40th birthday. He's not gotten laid. He's tried three girls. He's lost the Tolson play. Now he's told the worst news of his life." Now, that's already starting to tell you how to play that scene.

Take the scene where Deborah/ Michael and Julie are in bed and he coaches her. It is that in one long, slow push in, and one long, slow pull-back. It is one of the very few sexual love scenes you have with

them, and it would be wrong to put back and forth. What is happening is a growing awareness of how much Michael is by her story. In a scene, Julie is addressing in front of him, and so, even though it is her talking, the camera leans her and slowly pushes it on Michael, because he is the one that it is happening to.

Consequently, you would say, "I have to do a close-up of her while she's talking that whole story about the wallpaper", but that's not what the scene is about. It is about Michael falling in love with her because she is more intimate with him than she would be if they made love. That leads on him, and in order to see it lead you have to concentrate on him.

Then, since you are there, you can't leave it will be forever you. He takes his hand out of the covers. What is he going to do? Is he going to push you back with the camera. He is going to reach her hair. And so it leads you to a visual style.

What do you have planned next?

Alvin is doing a project for me based on the life of Deborah Hoffman and Lillian Hellman. We did the script of *Julia* together, and then I had a schedule problem. I

had committed myself to *Deathbed* because I didn't think Alvin would finish *Julia* as fast as he did. Jane [Fonda] was ready to shoot right then, and Twentieth Century-Fox didn't want to lose her, so they asked me if I'd let *Julia* go. I got paid off and I did *Deathbed*, while [Paul] Zussman took over *Julia*.

That is how Alvin and I became friends with Lillian Hellman. And over the years we have talked together about doing their life. We were finally able to construct her life the right, that would have to buy the rights to all her books. *Phenomena*, *Straw Hat* and *An Unfinished Woman*.

Alvin has been working for just about a year now on that story, and we should have it in the next couple of weeks.

It will be interesting to compare with "The Way We Were", because one can see possible connections between the two...

Well, our life is the same one. Spread playing Hellman and Redford playing Alvin. That's what it was designed for. Maybe it's solvable. I don't know. Sometimes pictures about real people are very tough to do. You have more freedom when they're all imaginary. ★



Just Fonda and soon Richard Gere, as Lillian Hellman and Deborah Hoffman in Paul Zussman's *Julia*, scripted by Alvin Karpis and Sydney Postcard

# THE DISMISSAL

John O'Hara

**The Dismissal** is a confirmation (read: a lengthy television re-enactment) of the public record which celebrates the most regrettably constitutional moment in Australian history.

The one-hour, three-part series opens by calling attention to its own status as a fiction, a film about political events. The opening credits unfold against a black background to the accompaniment of piano music and the voice-over asserts the central reflexive mood of the production: the attempt to order political events and understand them as the context of their time. The production also immediately establishes a level of abstraction far exceeding these events: "Looking back there are so many things. So many threads that weave the fabric of our lives." The opening shots, in black and white, are of Vietnam, Nazism, the Middle East and civil disobedience. The images of street violence dissolve to the Statue of Liberty, and to a similar shot of the same in color, with Australia picked out in red.

This introduction establishes the tone, mood and value of material of the film, and deliberately draws the viewer's attention to its own construction. The voice-over then makes the transition to Australia's own political fortunes during the period of the early 1970s: "But I want to tell you about one country and some things which happened there and partly take it apart." The movie dissolves to "It's Time" (the 1972 Labor Party campaign theme), shown in black and white of Gough Whitlam (Gleeson

as the Opposition) and the election of 1972, contrast with color shots of crowds singing, history and its chaos.

The introduction takes one through a brief sequence of events until the second Labor electoral victory in May 1974. Then, on a note of impending confusion, and looming political and economic problems for the country, the cast of the production is introduced visually: portraits of the politicians together with images of the actors who play them. The contrast between newsmen and an fictional reconstruction is made deliberately within the context of the film's own narrative style, which includes elements of the silent film and television soap opera.

This style develops as the 1983 fictional representation dramatically takes over the credit of past events drawn from newsmen. The past becomes the present as the film moves into longer sequences about Jim Cairns (Minnis) for Overseas Trade, Rex Connor (Minnis) for Minerals and Energy and the opposition Liberal party. Deliberate quotation indicates the sources and propagation of events: diaries and police files become *Clashings*, parliament houses, ministers' offices, the slow unraveling of the loose affair.

**The Dismissal** is a restricted, terse and tacit historical reproduction. The program refuses to go beyond the historical record — at least the public record — as what it will depict. Relations between Rex Connor (Bill Hunter)

and Jim Cairns (John Hargreaves) and Julie Morrison (Nadia Dajic), do not become speculative or sensational. The opening image of Khondra is one of a supply, *delivered*, small-time operator, an underdog who uses the chance for an unexpected promotion. The program dramatizes the character effectively while refusing to depict him as the more conventional cliché drawn from television, police or spy series.

A great deal of the critical attention given the series has concentrated on its supposed historical accuracy. How well or badly does Menzies play Gough Whitlam, how convincing is John Stauden as Malcolm Fraser, how convincing is John Meillon as Sir John Kerr? The central historical dynamic in the events of 1975 is taken far granted, and critical attention focuses on the program's supposed fidelity to the public record. Jim McClelland, former Minister for Labor in the Whitlam Government, wrote: "As a participant in the events with which it deals, I can attest that it makes a pretty good stab at the truth" (*Koon* clearly, *The Age*, March 17, 1983).

But perhaps the central critical problem in this genre is to accept the drama as the truth, to establish, and not to take it simply as a historical re-enactment in which the characters, plot and conclusions are already known. This is neither costume-drama nor simply spectacle. **The Dismissal** sums up its own images,



Alan Page as Gough Whitaker "seeing" a fictional world which depends... on the patterns of memory's contribution to his own dramatic form. *The Australian*



John Duxson as Michael Power "without doubtless and persistence." *The Document*

metaphors and explanations, and establishing, too, its own tone and point of view within which both events can be considered and general reflections about politics and democracy contained.

Perhaps at the outset one should discuss the question of whether the series represented politics in a way that contemporary viewers, who lived through these events, could find their depiction credible. It has been said, for example, that Fraser's coldness, aloofness and pomposity were well-represented, but that Whitlam was reduced to a stammering figure of pretension without dignity. But in terms of our approach to television criticism, the question is neither about the skill with which certain figures have been represented, nor about the ways in which the public record of the series has been reconstructed. This approach implies a contrast between images drawn from "real life" and the representations of precisely these events and characters on the screen.

What in fact happens with television drama, and quite self-consciously with this one, is that it constructs a fictional world which depends for its strength and conviction not on how well it can mirror a middle course between particular political views, nor on the accuracy of its characterizations, but on the patterns of meanings it establishes in its own dramatic terms. These patterns involve the ways in which the program makes politics live as drama, and the

historical explanations it proposes for the events that unfold.

The opening shots of the parliament establish the program's attitude to the institutions and forms of power, rather than to its dynamics. These are followed by lots of characters and scenes in the production, the latter introduction to the series is brought to an end with a freeze-frame of Whitlam arriving in Australia on November 11, 1974. A voice-over tells this "exactly one year later the Labor Government will be dismissed from office." The form suggests Greek drama — religion and imposition — rather than television realism with its suspense and tempo.

*The Document* is only briefly and sketchily set in context of world affairs, just enough to identify Australia on the map; the program is clearly interested in the success of its own chronology. The Australian history of the series, as modified and staged on the screen, is a public record of events and issues drawn from the media agenda. Coherent recourse to newspapers, to events shown on film and places and so photographs of figures, such as Don Dunstan or Mick Young, reinforces the impression that the film's reconstruction is indisputable from the real events of the time.

Nonetheless, certain dramatic images and themes are developed: the parliamentary rowdiness, with the Speaker shouting for order; the decision makers become the dramatic chorus; the focus on the mechanics of power-

breaking in the absence of any consideration of the underlying dynamics; the reliance on conventional patterns of the more substantial of Labor members and the cynical lust for power of their Liberal counterparts; and the theme that the destruction of political consensus endangers democracy. There is also a sense of the canon established between government and people, stressing popular support for the Labor Government's right to serve out its term of office.

An early interview sequence shows Whitlam responding to a question about New Prime Minister Tony Blair's decision to replace a member of parliament with another member drawn from a different political party. "A fundamental cornerstone of Australian democracy has been demolished," warns Whitlam, "and democracy itself is in danger." The style of the program is to concentrate on the deliberate statement of political and constitutional facts, while the means reinforce an appearance of authority, almost claustrophobic in their emphasis on the trappings of power, the cars, offices, corridors and the parliament.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the series is the evocation of tone, the way in which it structures anger, opposition and controversy to a largely developed almost without melodrama. There is no contrived build-up to the climax; the suggestions of tragedy are carefully designed into the program's conclusion, the images translate from the screen in their

fictional world to newsmen of the original events, in it to confer a degree of authenticity on the production and, incidentally, at the same time to distance the viewers from any illusion that the program has presented the truth of the matter.

The evocation of some causes about partly because of the intricate visual presentation of the political context and partly because of the voice-over which proceeds in a somber and relentlessly, not to say funereal, manner, as though the sequences have been snuck together in a thin layer of slow-moving caustic. The voice-over pertinently stresses for the audience, the point, the universal statement ("And so it's done. The thing that can never be undone." Or, "And so it goes. The tide of events beats us constantly into the future").

The narrative reconstructions proceed usually at least between a recognition that historical events have specific and traceable causes and development, and a kind of resignation to the inevitability of the past. This occurs in part because of the way in which the program structures its images: parliament as a set of competing benches, Sir John Kerr as the tyrannical grounds of Yarralumla, with their suggestion of English counterparts the local political system and the vestigial influence wielded in a conventional and relatively static fashion.

So what historical dynamics is suggested? The images of politics are narrow, the notion of conflict fatal, the program veers between trying to dramatize a constitutional conflict in terms of an opposition between the Liberal Party and the popular will, staged in support for the Labor Government, and a personal tragedy centered on the figure of the Governor-



John McGraw as Sir John Kerr: what is their cause in action? *The Document*

General, usually depicted with a glass in his hand, and finally represented as a kind of reluctant clown, self-important, edgy, responsive to any small indications that he too could play a part in the center of the stage.

One is also told, in the end, that "how who forget history are bound to move it," this speech stands, perhaps, as a statement of intention about the program. But what is in question is precisely what is forgotten that is, as *The Document* sees it, the conspicuous behavior of the Liberal Party in opposition, behavior directed against the government, the people and the values that safeguard Australian democracy. But the essence of this behavior, the mood and expressions of the constitutional clash, is not explained because the program does not attempt to rehearse but to represent a set of events. This representation is clear in the conclusion when the drama collapses into files of Whitlam on the steps of parliament: losses, interest with shots suggesting the missing crowd.

Watching *The Document* is to experience a slow, even, somber representation of fateful events within a familiar frame. It is careful, respectful of the public record and unwilling to venture beyond it. This is its weakness and its strength, its congruence to public affairs television and its deliberate intention to discuss. It is an excellent representation of speeches, accompanied with sharp pen portraits that observed in its larger vein by its theme: the voice-over, for instance, makes "So slowly the crisis came to flood, swelling Kerr on reluctantly into history." But is Kerr the agent or the victim of this history? What is the relation of character to event? One can admire the

program's refusal to consider crime or political theories, while noting that it may have limited appeal for viewers who did not live through the events.

In summary then, in terms of its fidelity to the surface of events, *The Document* is convincing in the detail and scope of some of its dramatizations. Some appear to be drawn directly from life, and others, such as Tony Kerr (Glynis Nunn), are lifted from Shakespeare. However, these are not the terms in which the program needs to be assessed, and a deliberately odd attention to its own status as fiction. The program must be taken in its own terms, despite the pressure to accept it simply as a re-run of what everyone already knows. The *Document* attempts to gloss over its authenticity by including references to mountable traces of real life through newspapers, photos, television images and credits. And the relationship between its own fiction and the original events changes throughout the program series, i.e., the production does not establish an unstable relationship between its attempt to reproduce events and explain them by rehearsing them. For example, an explanation of the power-broking in the Liberal Party does not go beyond the the corridors and lobby-hall images of popular fiction.

The overall objective of insuring a historical dynamic finally tends to collapse with the assertion that tales of history take people with them, but this soothing analogy is never a very convincing explanation. The final project for the public record consists *The Document* to a fatal fiction, with a sacramental status and a kind of deliberate transparency, of a similar though different order as the Astric company *Line We Forget*. ★



Bill Hunter as Sir John Kerr: borne forward on the tide of events. *The Document*



Whitlam in parliament, playground for competing factions. *The Document*

# Picture Preview

## Careful, He Might Hear You

Set in Sydney in the 1930s, *Careful, He Might Hear You* is the poignant but nightmare story of a boy caught in a bitter custody battle between two sisters. The boy is called PS, and he is seven years old.

Based on the novel by Sumner Locke Elliott, the film contrasts Lila, the anxious but tough suburban housewife, with her sister Vanessa, who is worldly, rich and beautiful, and who covets PS to fill the emptiness of her past.

*Careful, He Might Hear You* is directed by Carl Schultz, from a screenplay by Michael Jenkins, for producer Ian Robb. Director of photography is John Seale, production designer John Stoddard and costume designer Bruce Fenderson.



Right: Aunt Lila (Maree Nagata) and PS (Nicholas Glatch). Below: PS is surrounded by a team of 'aunt' morning, noon and Linda George (Pete Whalley). An audition.





Above left and right: P.J., the center of a custody battle; below: Ed, "the coolest bar ketcher in Hollywood"

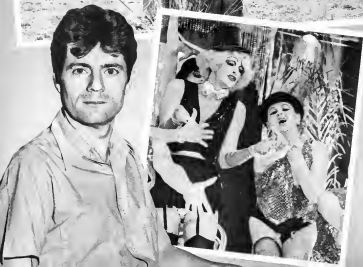






*Above left: Anne Ramsey (Wendy Hughes, PS and LHM. Above right: PS and Vincent. Below left: PS plays cricket with some old chums. Below right: Vincent.*





# Denny Lawrence

Christine Cremon interviews the co-scriptwriter of "Goodbye Paradise"

You are best known as the musical for your co-authorship of "Goodbye Paradise", but in fact you have worked more frequently as a director . . .

I began as an actor, graduated from NIDA, and worked in radio and television. I then began directing in theatre, and writing for theatre and television. I found that it was directing that I liked doing most.

Then I decided, being always loved film, that film was the future. For this country and for me, so I got some money together and made a few short films. I applied to the Australian Film and Television School, which I saw as a good way to obtain all the necessary technical background. I lacked. I was accepted, and, at the time of my biggest success in the theatre, I went back to school.

How long ago was this?

I was in the second intake. We graduated in 1979 into a film industry that was already on a downward slide, until the last boom of 1981-82.

Is that why you went into directing 'soap operas' for television . . .

Yes. I soon decided that rather than sit around trying to get one script off the ground, which I had done, I would be wiser to take off working for commercial television and producing an enormous amount. That way I could gain experience in coverage, working with large crews and being a hard head.

What do you think of soap operas? Do you think you are 'defining your identity' by working on them?

"Soap opera" is an awful term; it is something that has come to us, in fact, from American radio, and it is slightly misnomer. Soap operas are mostly melodramas, and melodrama is a completely

legitimate form of drama. And it is one that obviously appeals to a lot of people.

Guilty pleasures?

Yes, guilty pleasures. Audiences are very keen to forgive them and to find that there is no reason to be guilty about liking them. However, the unfortunate thing in this country is that they are professed far too readily, on quite scrupulous schedules. The results in storylines, which after all are pretty rare in any melodrama, always being exposed to the public. The pipeline is invariably rather thin and, if it happens to be built on relationships, then there isn't anything much to distract. If there are car chases, or karate fights or something, there is a lot of action and people don't really worry about the plot.

Are you saying that there can be quality soaps?

There have been and will be, but only if it is realised that you can produce two hours of television a week without killing everybody off.

Do you think "The Restless Years", which you directed, or indeed "Sons and Daughters" are quality products?

No, by definition, they are not. In fact, by admission of the people making television, there is a distinction between soaps and so-called "quality television."

Do you mean adaptations of Australian novels, such as "Lancelot Brinkley"?

Yes. A Emma Lake Ashie. Last Gethse, Water Under the Bridge and Against the Wind are examples of "quality television." When people really should be saying in "quality television", I suppose. Against the Wind is a quality melodrama, but it is melodrama. It is just that they have a lot more time to do it. It is basically a good yarn. It worked a lot better than, say, *Sarah Dane*, which somehow just didn't seem to click.

## Short Films

What films did you make before "Goodbye Paradise"?

I made a number of short films before I went to the APTS, and, of course, I made several while I was there. That was a great experience: all directors should have an opportunity to learn from mistakes. I would just as soon not have the films seen though, and certainly they aren't, distribution for short films being what it is.

Television is also a place where you can experiment because, although it is seen by millions of people, it is an ephemeral quality. It disappears quickly and people don't have to look at my mistakes over and over. Better still, you don't have to look at them.

Are there any ideas that will current in that short films are what you avoid by arriving late at a cinema . . .

Well, I am talking about Australian fiction shorts which, unfortunately, are not getting the kind of distribution by the major exhibitors. A few films from the APTS have been released with features, but not always with films that did well. The shorts themselves were very good.

The short film is a fascinating and difficult form and it should be given more support. I am quite interested in it, just as I am in the short story as a literary form.

One of your films was a finalist in the Greater Union Awards . . .

Yes, *The Outing*, which is far from being the best I have done. But it had a certain amount of style.



Flashing Lawrence's short film *The Outing*, a finalist in the Greater Union Awards

Denny Lawrence with two images from *Goodbye Paradise*, which Lawrence co-wrote with Bill Ellis

and, because it was a period piece that was fairly well produced, it had lots of nice costumes, locations and vintage cars. Those needed to please those of the general public who saw it. It was also a good story and people like it for that reason. But it was immediately unpopular with the Sydney Film Festival audience, who don't like decadent living displayed as film.

**Do they prefer to be told the Film Festival and be filled with home-grown guilt?**

Well, I didn't say that... But there is probably an amount of truth in that, yes.

It was interesting that one of the Greater Union judges was from Moyn, and he said that the only film he had seen in the decade that he would show at Moyn was *The Outing*. Most people took that as a tremendous insult. I didn't. It is very easy to classify a film that happens to look good or tell a simple story or be popular in some way as being necessarily bad.

**But don't you think this reaction against period films is somewhat refreshing?**

Yes, we have for various reasons delved into our past a little too much. One reason is that it is easier to get away with things in period, you can tell a weak story more easily because the surroundings are much more pleasant to look at.

Another reason, which is quite legitimate, is that people have a tendency to find their roots so help explain where they are now. Australia is probably overdue for the kind of nationwide fever that hit the Americas 150 years after the pilgrims reached Plymouth Rock.

**But what about this rabid nationalism? You were one of the people who agitated for preservation of the Australasian collection when it was threatened by destruction not so long ago. I remember you writing in the *National Times* that people were interested in Australian culture, but that they thought anything from any other country, especially from Hollywood, was not worthy of being used...**

Absolutely. Of course, I support totally the move to find and preserve old Australian film because our cinema heritage is very important. But it is hardly as right, or, as I said in the *National Times*, as influential as the young Australian filmmakers, as the Hollywood product. Therefore, the serious influence is undesirable. The fact that the prototype of some obscure Flemish old woman are being destroyed ought to be of concern to an Australian painter today.

As the people who saw some of those films at the time realized, they were important films then —



Anne Marley and Rosanna Wulfsberg in *'The Outing'*; Peter and Stephanie, as which Lawrence has worked as director

important because they influenced other filmmakers. It is rather like being able to hang onto the plays of, say, Pinter or some of the obscure Europeans from whom Shakespeare pinched his plots. It is very interesting to read them and occasionally you scratch quite a good one. It is just that people put things into slots, just the way that they always show *Shane* and *High Noon* rather than other Westerns in school classes. They are the ones that are talked about in the text books. A lot more, and better film, tend to be ignored.

## Goodbye Paradise

**I understand that the original concept of 'Goodbye Paradise' was years...**

Yes. Being a genre buff and a fan of Raymond Chandler, I came up with a plot a fair while ago now which involved an ex-cop on the Gold Coast getting into a Chandler-esque situation. It is definitely a kind of decadent Southern Californian territory up there, and it seemed an ideal setting. Unfortunately, the plot I had evolved a quasi-religious commune headed by a guy who turned out to be a charlatan, and a lot of them got killed off. So when the housewife thing came along, I thought it would be in gear itself, or at least be seen as a rip-off, so I put it away.

Then some years later, while talking to Robb Ellis, the film came up and it appeared to Robb. He was negotiating with the New South Wales Film Corporation to

produce a package of scripts, so we submitted the idea to them. They liked it a lot and, pronto, we had a lot of money to go up to the Gold Coast to try and write a script around my first premise.

**Is this the first time you have written a script with someone else?**

No, I have been a frequent collaborator, as has Robb. I have always been mostly primarily as a director, and occasionally have tended to collaborate, either in the theme with actors, when I was writing, or in film scripting with other writers.

**How did you and Ellis get on? Do you see yourselves as Bennett and Fletcher?**

I think Robb might have thought we were Johnson and Maxwell. I won't say it was easy, because a collaboration is. But film is a collaborative medium and this is something people don't always understand. Very few people who make films understand the surprising process.

**Some people have been critical of the conclusion of 'Goodbye Paradise'...**

The criticism have been valid. In some ways we wrote two films in one. I was writing most of a great piece and Robb was trying to incorporate some of his personal politics. Also, towards the end of the writing of the film, the relationship was becoming a little strained and I think the end of the script suffered as a result. And because the script we gave Carl (Schultz, director) had some flaws, especially the end, it also allowed him, I think, free rein to push his concept more firmly into his shoes.

The mystique of the dramatic screenplay at the army base is something a lot of people enjoy, but many others find it slightly superficial. I don't say I think that myself. It pushes the film over the brink. It also is the only occasion in which Stacy is not present at all events, and I think somehow that is a mistake. He has a sort of omniscient presence, as that his wave-down mechanism is still there at Ted's death, but he is not physically present to witness it. This is the sort of opinion that people have expressed.

**The voice-over in 'Goodbye Paradise' is rather unconvincing for a film of today...**

Well, of course, it is the detective genre and it seemed so most necessary to conform to that genre. An 'updating' of genre, in the way it is done in *The Long Goodbye* for instance, which is more of a satire anyway, is somewhat faint, is somehow a betrayal of that genre. A film like *Farewell*



Mike Darcy (Ray Barrett) is threatened by one of his old police associates, Carly (Paul Doolan) in *'Goodbye Paradise'*

My *Lowly* comes to terms with the prize much better. And that, of course, contains voice-over narration, although it is admittedly set in period.

I note that there are a number of films around with this narration device, it was interesting to see that two of the films at the 1982 Australian Film Awards contained it and they were both fairly well liked. People seem to like oral complexity in film.

Ray Barrett is a very *Chandler*-like character. He has that thread-like, Robert Mitchum-type face...

He certainly has. Of course, we wrote the film for Ray. When we did the research sent to the Gold Coast, Bob and I met up with Ray and spent a week there going to know him. So we really did put a lot of Ray in that script. It is probably one of the few times that has happened in Australia and I think we were rewarded for that by a great performance. I know that Ray loves the character and is very keen to play *Sky* again.

Was *Robyn* Nevin also an original choice?

No. We had a suggested casting panel in our script and some of those suggestions we felt were very important. In some cases we were not necessarily right. *Robyn* wasn't somebody we had thought of, but her performance is a great strength of the film. In fact, another thing that people are unhappy with about the film is the death of the character played by *Robyn* Nevin. She does such a good job and makes the character so appealing that it really hurts when she is killed off. A slightly more insular, brittle performer might not have caused that kind of consternation.

I guess that is how we first conceived the role. But what *Robyn* does is really good and it was probably a mistake not to re-write the part.

What about the role of the "Harry Lane" character (Gip Dolan)?

That is another interesting one. We hadn't thought of *Gip* Dolan because Harry is an Englishman, we thought of somebody like *Anthony Quinn*.

As with the casting of *Kick Douglas*?

No, that wasn't our intention. We hadn't thought of his role as one that should be played by somebody famous to put bumps on its seats. It was simply a question of the kind of actor that we saw in the part.

*Gip's* performance is really one of the highlights of the film. It is a character well worth watching for, too, and one we would strongly recommend, since fortunately we didn't kill him off.

Are you and Ellis going to write the sequel?

Yes is fact, Bob and I have already been to South Australia which is the setting for the sequel of *Goodbye Paradise*. We are heading to call it "Goodbye Adelaide".

The script takes place at the Adelaide Festival of Arts and involves various visiting Russians and Americans in the kind of plot that you would expect from the first one. We have spent a couple of weeks just going around South Australia looking at various interesting locations. There's more than that kind of research trip which are invaluable to writing, and suggest that maybe such trips should be done a bit more. For

instance, when we were researching *Goodbye Paradise*, I went to the hinterland of the Gold Coast and discovered not only that it was adjacent to Currumbin, the army installation and the retirement spot of a number of doctors and Queensland politicians, but it was also the largest rhubarb growing area in the country, which I thought very amusing and well worth mentioning in the film. I knew a lot of people enjoy the rhubarb. It becomes a symbol for something much more important than what it is.

People say a lot about the bright young doctors and their role in the retirement Australian film industry. What observations do you have to make about the input of the writers of these films?

I think it has been a popular misconception that Australia doesn't have enough good writers. I am pleased that a lot of people are rethinking that perhaps what we lack most is good creative producers — available, of course, in an industry that has been going for a relatively short time.

There are a lot of good writers around, though they are not all currently working in film or even in drama. They may be writing advertising, journalism or fiction. Writers like *John Clarke*, who co-wrote *Lonely Hearts*, and *Prime Cuts* are moving into film. That is a very important trend to cultivate.

Again there are misconceptions about the filmmaking process even by people in it. The filmmaking doesn't start the day the cameras begin to roll over that first precious frame, with the idea and the writing of it, which may sound like a truism, but it is a fact people overlook. You are actually making a picture when you are writing it. It is very important that the creative input of the writer is recognized in the cinema.

I don't think for that matter that the input of the actor has been appreciated enough either, and it has tended to be the case that directors have come from technical areas and production in our industry, and not from the ranks of actors and writers. The best directors, if you look at world cinema, have been actors or writers, or both.

As well as writing and directing, you also teach at the AFPS. What is your profile there?

I have been screen studies lecturer at the school.

What does this entail?

The area of screen studies is one that is under review at the moment and a new emphasis has been placed upon it in the course. The history is that, to begin with, the director of the AFPS, Professor *Tougher*, was the teacher of film



Lecture with his Australian Film Award film *Goodbye Paradise*, which he won with writer *Bob Ellis*.

history. When he left he asked me to take over that area. I felt it was important to incorporate a certain amount of the examination of contemporary cinema, particularly the Australian cinema, and also television, because that is an area where graduates from the AFPS will find work. So I set about trying to widen the scope of that program.

I think the next few years will see a much more exciting time for the students. The teaching of direction is being approached in a more complete way, with emphasis on performance and content. That whole general studies area is something the AFPS is getting into much more than it has in the past. Although it has always recognized its importance, it has been very hard to get people to teach it. So the AFPS has been accused of being a technical institution. Indeed, it has produced very good craftspeople, but it has yet to produce a lot of good ideas people. I think we'll see that happening. The stimulus will be provided for that process to take place.

I believe the importance of studying what has gone before in the other arts and in film is absolutely essential. Students in the AFPS have come to me with ideas that they think are highly original and, of course, somebody has done it before. The students haven't seen the work of *D. W. Griffith* or *Eric von Stroheim* or *Buster Keaton* or whoever it may be, in about most cases and probably more infrequently seen film-makers. Somebody else and, "Nothing is original except what has been forgotten", and I think that an enormous amount has been forgotten about what has been done in film. It is very important that we learn that before we go forward. ★



Director Carl Schultz and actress *Robyn Nevin* (as *Kate*), preparing the scene that led to *Kick Out's* appearance in the sequel.

# MOVING OUT

## Scripting and Casting



Marcus Breen

Two primary aspects of filmmaking, scripting and casting, are surely, if ever, considered or challenged. But they never disappear from the filmmaking process, a process that is hidden from view. The director is in command, in the tricks of light and sound which our culture presents as film rarely take one behind the curtain and into the process. The exceptions to this dichotomy include the work of Jean-Luc Godard — e.g., *Vivre d'esprit* and his recent film *Pasion* — and Francesco Truffaut's *Day for Night*.

Austrian film, generally, is preoccupied with the camera rather than the camera. For example, *Moving Out* combines narrative with colorful images to produce a mythic illusion. But no data are given to the audience about the unusual process involved in making this film. For this, one has to go to the 24-year-old director, Michael Pattinson, whose idiosyncratic approach to screenwriting and casting challenged convention within Austrian filmmaking.

Pattinson scripted *Moving Out* in order to investigate the particular reality of the stories of Jan Sardi. A second-generation Italian, Sardi works above his experience as a teacher at an inner-city school in Melbourne. When Sardi was a student at that same school, 99 per cent of the children were Anglo-Saxon, today, the school is 99 per cent Italian. Says Pattinson:

"The stories Jan Sardi had to tell were very funny. They were the sorts of stories we have all experienced as kids which, when you look back and see things in your childhood, seem not so terribly devastating or shocking. The intent was to focus the story around these things we all experienced as teenagers. At the time, those things were life and death issues; really, they are of little consequence. But a story from a kid's point of view, highlighting these issues, was interesting dramatic material."

But while Pattinson found the stories "sweetness and giggles," he had no "inherent passion for the subject matter." The desire to investigate the issue of multi-culturalism subsequently developed, but "only through my involvement with the project."

"You are dealing with characters in a conflict situation, in a dual identity crisis and so on. On one hand, you have kids going to school and being Australians, and, on the other, their kids come home from school and have to be what their parents do not want to live with. That is when they come from and what their heritage is."

With a series of stories based on the everyday conflicts of Italian adolescents, and with financial assistance from the Creative Development Branch of the Australian Film Commission, Pattinson and Sardi worked towards

integrating the story scores into a complete scenario, in finding a "thread through the whole thing."

"What we had to do was try and isolate a premise or theme. Well, that wasn't hard. It is a story about change, about 'moving out', similar to Gino's family is moving from one suburb to another. Also, Gino is maturing and passing through adolescence. And it is about people coming from one country to live in another."

"Isolating that premise, we could then go through the material we had gathered in a very long draft, which probably was running to approximately 250 pages, and look at the material relating to that premise."

The conflict, change and struggle for personal and cultural identity that permeates the characters in *Moving Out* is supported by a sub theme of class issues. People who migrate from one country to another often do so because the "other", as opposed to "mother", country offers something better — improved socio-economic conditions and a consequent upward mobility. And so, in *Moving Out*, Gino's parents decide to move from Flury to Doreville.

The concept of change is the most notable aspect of *Moving Out* because it allows an examination of some of the factors that operate in a society like Australia. Pattinson has

worked this theme gently, avoiding the temptation to judge Gino's family for its desecration, while allowing the theme to become something of a center for the audience conscience.

"Gino's father wants to get his kids out of what he regards as an almost lock into the Australian heartland. He believes, for better or for worse... I won't make any comment on that... that his children will receive a better education in Decatur than they will receive in Perth.... But I don't think that's real class consciousness on behalf of the boy's father, however misguided you or I may think that to be. Basically, the father has all the free will he wants."

Gino is finally permitted to resolve the conflict of finding whether he is Australian or Italian. The question in his mind, says Patterson, is "Well, what am I?" And the decision is made, in part, for him by the arrival from Italy of friends of the family, who reinforce his young Italian identity. Gino reaches a final conclusion, but it seems to be a dilemma that remains long after the credits have rolled past.

Certainly, no simple solutions are offered. It seems to be reflections to attempt to arrive at solutions because what *Moving Out* offers is realist drama, supported by astypical optimism for the future.

*Moving Out* is not only interesting for its idiosyncratic style, but also for its unusual casting approach.

First, there was the problem of finding young people with acting ability; agencies had little to offer, especially when the second problem, especially to speak Italian, was considered. Third, Italian and migrant children... the children whom Patterson was trying to find... are themselves caught up in cross-cultural conflict. And, furthermore, adolescence, the fundamental confusion of adolescence of the younger characters, was already a complicating element in their lives. It is ironic, such as these that separate the gentle realism of *Moving Out* from the raw unconscious of youth seen in, say, *Hard Knocks*.

The casting techniques confirmed these points to Patterson when, after researching the film and sustaining hundreds of boys for the lead male role, it became clear that Gino's concerns in the film are "representative of an enormous number of boys I met."



Gino (Peter Colemore), Judy (Judy Cooper) and Mia (Jenny Smith) Michael Patterson's *Moving Out*

By casting "off the beaten", Patterson was able to identify the real characteristics of his potential performers while drawing a screenplay that would complement those characteristics.

"I think that the way we decided to cast the film, and it has been very successful, is to find kids whose personal histories and lives very readily with the characters they are playing in the script, the only challenge for them, in order to perform, is to be themselves."

"My task as a director is to create an environment in which they are relaxed enough to be themselves. There is only one way to do it: search for kids who really embody the characteristics of the players in the film. We certainly didn't find that amongst the ranks of the average kid who may have been to education schools and all the best drama schools in the world."

This oppositional approach to formal casting and traditional casting inevitably carries overtones from the film and where established. But of Australian film to insist, the language of the star system inevitably has to be challenged. Furthermore, Patterson believes that the cast in *Moving Out* isn't very quickly that "acting is being themselves." Realist drama can only function adequately while people are encouraged to act as they really are. Release the main characters was a lengthy process for Patterson and associate producer Julia Monroe. It was organized in several steps and based on the premise that Patterson and Monroe would have to look beyond the ability of children to deliver scripted lines into their personality. Taking this "risk" meant that the outcome would depend on a workshop process which lasted almost 12 months.

The problem was to find the raw material. Patterson and Monroe began by visiting minority Melbourne schools. Having contacted Greek and English teachers at the schools, photographic sessions were organized and "loads" of shots were produced. Colloquial with was sessions during lunch hours when the children were asked to tell jokes. With 10 minutes to learn a joke... something, started Patterson, with a lot of a story to it, where you begin at the beginning... the last-up joke."

"There's a lot you can tell about a kid from telling a joke: some kids would just stand up there and recite the joke that has been told to them, while others would stand up there and you could see they had performing ability, because they would really try and sell you the joke."

One practical reason for using this method was the literacy of many of the children.

The second stage in the casting process was to match potential characters with physical attributes. Then, with six or seven children being considered for each role, weekend workshops were organized under the direction of Peter Sarra (the writer's brother). Scripted lines were not considered essential at this stage; rather, the children were taught to "focus and channel" their performances into something akin to the role they would play. This allowed the full range of the expressive abilities of the children to be examined.

"We could then to discover what there was about this kid that is similar to the character. Through the workshops we learned to choose as a much smaller group of people for each part, and ultimately, went through the formal process of working to see how they would go with some of the script lines. Then, formal film screen tests were done to see how they would come up on camera."

At last, one long-term advantage resulted from this workshop process: the improvisation

and spontaneity that developed among the actors was readily incorporated into the film. And, after the lengthy workshop sessions with the final cast, their natural reactions about being the camera were reduced.

Not only does this process involve a reappraisal of the traditional pressure upon actors to learn lines and characterizations in a short time, but it also suggests that patience and perseverance pay off.

"Much of the ability and rapport of the teenage group who formed the principal cast is the result of a very firm acquaintance they had built up with each other by the time they arrived on the set on the first day. I expect also, without being presumptuous, they had some sort of confidence in me, because I had got to know them very well."

This process, particularly when it is successful, will always involve some exploration. In fact, the more filmmakers explore new possibilities for breaking free of mainstream film norms, the more will Australia's film culture improve. For film critics, viewers and makers, this is a warning that the spirit of filmmaking, as established in this country, is too often a barrier to rapid progress of any kind. An example comes from Patterson, whose work on *Moving Out* has been recognized by screenplay and screenplay awards of opportunity.

"Some people have seen the film and liked it. I've been offered different things to do that I have accepted. I have people say 'Michael made *Moving Out*, and it's a masterpiece, it's that was a good film, here's a script with teenagers in it, you have it ready by next week please?' But, it just doesn't work that way."

Any lesser Patterson has heard from *Moving Out* will become evident as he continues to pursue a filmmaking career. At present he is working on the production for a new film, *Street Heroes*, again with Peter Sarra. One can only hope that he manages to avoid the temptation to enter the ring with the quick sale and production oriented merchants of the cash business.

As long as healthy film come from young and creative Australian filmmakers, film culture can move little into more inclusive criticism of the society. Moreover, as long as the process is always challenged and refused, the process itself will reap its own rewards. ■



Study and Helen, making the most of the limited resources of low-budget film *Moving Out*





# Film Festivals

## Manila International Film Festival 1983

Debi Enker and Tom Ryan

Charting a brief history of the kinds of problems facing the development of Philippine cinema, Leonardo Lee here notes the contrasting effects of U.S. cultural aid.

"As early as 1944, Hollywood had the Philippines written all but itself as a market encompassing the best of its national role."

This kind of control produced an all too familiar chain of events. A control of the market effectively meant a control of audience tastes and, though this can be less readily verified, it would appear that only those local films which passed the American censors' bar in Hollywood were likely to find wide outlets in the Philippines.

For Leo Bruck's, the best known of the new Philippine filmmakers, the roots of the problem do not lie with the censorship, to which others customarily refer as the "bottleneck" (i.e., national censorship, but in which Leonardo identifies as "the dynamics of cultural oppression").

"What we need report of as an audience that has been fed nothing but second sight, borrow money, and cheaply bought and sold mass-produced. A child raised on pork 'n' roll would find classical music strange, discordant, unpleasant, an audience used to the strappings of modern pleasure-mechanisms and mass-produced would regard a good film curiously when."

The problematic expansion of cinema market and audience, the current state of Philippine cinema can be productively understood in this historical context. Its future need not be fully determined by a past so recognized and acknowledged. The problem, together with an awareness of other developing national cinemas, become important factors in the revision of the "cultural struggle" necessary for the creation of an indigenous film voice. For Bruck, an indigenous voice in the Philippines, it is not simply a matter of discussing the cinematic tradition that has ruled in its history and providing his own critical stance, but of coming to a working dialogue with his audience through his films.

"The only way you can eliminate local cinema from an present 'bakya' status is an irretrievably negative level is to introduce radical changes and use success in creating one's desired audience."

In this context, one can readily appreciate the changing of Philippine film-makers at the time in which the Manila International Film Festival came to have been defined. On the

one hand, there is the rhetoric, delivered with accelerated force by Mariano Ibarra Marañon, "the last lady of the Philippines":

"An Ibarra Man. We, then, take home his intention. This Festival is a celebration. We shall have more exhibitions — of music, wit, and wisdom, the delight of the spirit and the refinement of sensibility without which survival and life itself would be but a grinding drudgery — a scene of desolation."

And there is the endorsement given to the Festival by the various industries who strive to deliver their goods to consumers: to raise the prices of the Manila regime and its "vociferous prodigies"; and to avoid a boycott or two, in which, if it were to be forced, they may be presented with a Carlton single award. "For services to the Festival," before retiring home, usually return the Pacific Air preferred pass was informed on the opening day, "This Festival isn't about films at all, it's about social activity." The sociological benefits of the Festival include, Ibarra wrote, side effects produced in achieving nationalistic sentiment and progress for the ongoing nation.

On the other hand, there is the optimism and programming of the Festival itself. A convenient double track provides the image of relevance for this, identifying the Festival simultaneously as a "living museum" and a "cine-museum" (my paraphrase), then bringing it close to the "European Film Festival." Clearly, it is the latter characteristic which dominates the ideological personality of the event, and, in terms of the day-to-day activity, the major role of the Festival is, in the words of a writing director, "where it all happens."

Perhaps as a response to French hegemony and the current, since then, abandonment of the 1952 Festival, 1983 sees the introduction of a showcase of some Philippine cinema and of some Mexican cinema Asian cinema (though one of the latter, *Barroco* film, is U.S. film). At a *Manila* (Early On) level appeared cinema the first night. Most of the attention, however, was focused on these films deemed appropriate for an international market, the short-metage films, and others which may have crossed a "decent" note, generally were relegated to secondary venues, as were

Given the need for the Festival to appear "new," after the last means withdrawal of government funding

under pressure from the World Bank, it was expected that the program would be centered in commercializing audiences. This, as well as the announcement that all proceeds from the "Festival for a Cause" were to be donated to "the recently, physically and socially handicapped," created a sense that any discussion of the festival film or the organization of the

Festival could only be a product of pressure. What is calculated by all of this, however, are broader concerns with which Ibarra in general, the critics of Philippine film, the development of a Philippine film culture and a sense of national identity, and the possibility for a progressive movement for change.

I.R.

*The following statement by Leo Bruck and screenwriter Mike de Leon provides its own perspective on the function of film festivals and on the place of the 1983 Manila International Film Festival in the life of The Philippines.*

### Press Statement February 3, 1983

In The Hollywood Reporter of January 30, the report of what has been described in the press as the Manila International Film Festival, it is reported that the Festival has been "inaugurated," in that Leo Bruck is now part of the Festival administration. (Our young Filipino friend is a Mike de Leon the somewhat?)

We would like to clarify our position with regard to the Festival.

We would like to make it clear that we are not "part of the Festival administration." We have co-operated with the Festival administration in areas involved in the production, presentation and promotion of various foreign films. Also, by being a director (as shown), as has been reported elsewhere of the evaluation committee which chose the projects to be produced by the International Cinema of The Philippines. Mike, by heading the technical committee in charge of exhibiting Filipino films.

Otherwise, we regret to say that we have given no representation about the Festival.

At the outset we would like to state that we are not against the holding of an international festival per se. Any attempt to discriminate against films, especially from Asia and The Philippines, can only be commendable. Last was, given the severe constraints on freedom of expression in the country, any effort to counter censorship and expand creative freedom is worthy of praise.

However, we believe that these intervening factors are not enough to offset the negative aspect of the Festival.

We believe that in a Third World Country which is a mere economic market, the organization and presentation accompanied the Festival are completely unnecessary. We have hopes to smaller international filmfests is

other countries, and we have seen that it is possible to detect attention in quality films on a more modest budget, without lavish displays.

We also deplore the fact that the Festival has misled the public by claiming that the movies being shown in commercial Manila movie theaters are basically the same Festival films being shown at the Festival site. This is simply not true. With two or three exceptions, the movies showing there, however, are not Festival films or quality films, but cheap exploitation programs with little or no artistic merit.

We feel that under the guise of fast-track artistic freedom and raising funds for the disabled, the Festival is encouraging the kind of cynical commercialism which is rampant in the movie industry but which is limited in support to cinema. The deterioration of film as a policy is even more apparent. Producers are showing no signs to make, not serious film making anymore there, but more exploitation qualities.

We feel that by succumbing to even some involvement in this regard, the Festival has become a situation which makes a distinction between reasonable — and which would obviously justify the appearance of more nationalistic as freedom of expression in the market. No better proof of this can be cited than the present position that the board of censors, far from being liberalized, has been given broader and more representative powers.

We hope that the public now being misled by the Festival will not be misled by the fact that the primary aim of a film festival is to showcase quality films. All other aims, however, may be thought they may be as secondary.

Leo Bruck  
Mike de Leon

1. Rafael M. Guerrero, ed., *Amnesia in Philippine Cinema, 1944*, pp. 40-79.  
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-42.

Opposite: *Kiko* (Ledy Clark), *Sugar* (Ora Cordero) and *Carlito's Way* (Miguel) during a short-out. Leo Bruck's *Kiko* and *Barroco*.

3. Jack Vance, President of the Motion Picture Export Association of America. His subsequent disappearance from the Festival attempt to coincide with the announcement that he had come to his Asian office from his home in February.

4. A similar line being taken by *Barroco* film, which the festival committee had rejected. Ibarra noted.







# Best (of) Friends

Geoff Mayer

My initial reaction in comparing the recent American film *Best Friends* with the 1961 Australian romantic comedy *The Best of Friends* was to highlight the differences between two films which explore a similar theme, and then to point to the unique qualities of the Australian film. However, I soon realised that the two films were not only superficially similar but that the differences between them had little to do with any intrinsic national qualities.

For some reason, we often get nervous when an Australian film attempts to work within a well-established generic framework and instead either to rework aspects of the Australian heritage (shipwreck or other elements of the ubiquitous "bush myth"), or to localise the setting, as in *Monkey Grip*. The *Miss From Swampy River*, on the other hand, unfortunately failed to acknowledge its basic melodramatic approach to characterisation and narrative sequence, which polarised into a simple tale of a young hero, Jim Craig (Tom Burlinson), having to overcome his orphaned highland origins. Also, the melodramatic device of two brothers, Spar and Harmonie (Kirk Douglas), separated by a distant feud and the "mystery" surrounding Harmonie's (Suelette Dugdale) real father, combined with the predictable domestic sequence in which Jim brings to the herd and elopes Harmonie and the community's acceptance as a reward, was sufficient to alert the critic that this is not *Beneath Peter's Skin* but some other narrative structure which can easily be dismissed with the tag, "Woolly Western". The point this provoked in Geoff Burrows and George Miller is apparent in their *Cinema Papers* interview<sup>1</sup> they apparently were aware of the popular conventions which appeal to a large audience but unaware that one critical establishment does not wish to tolerate the local industry by employing such categorisations.

Similarly, John Dugan had the audacity to depict urban Australia and the "belated city of Murch to Mouth (and) the complexity of *Winter of Our Dreams*"<sup>2</sup> and the critics could

congratulate themselves on dismissing *Far East* as *Casablanca* revisited. Hence the failure of the film resulted from the decision to employ,

"a narrative structure popularised by Hollywood films of the 1940s, deliberately as *Casablanca*. The routine combination produces a style as dependent on narrative drama that it constrains and debases the skills that have distinguished Douglas."<sup>3</sup>

Well, what is this pernicious narrative structure we are talking about? Could it be the inflexible "classical realist text", also known as the "neoclassical narrative" or the "Hollywood classical text"? It must be, as we have all seen it on late-night television films. However, the fact of the matter is that this narrative system is not unique to the pre-1960s American cinema but has its roots in the development of the Gothic novel, and in 18th and 19th Century

French and British stage drama.<sup>4</sup> It is part of the long evolution of that dramatic mode known as melodrama and, whether one likes it or not, it formed the basis of the narrative development of the Australian film, as well as the British, American and other national cinemas.

The problem is that the term "melodrama" connotes a series of negative images: the minds of many people, instead of being a neutral term that describes a particular dramatic structure.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, melodrama presents characters who are free of the internal dividedness which marks a tragic structure; the melodramatic protagonist is faced with an external problem (such as illness, natural disasters, race or class prejudice, etc.) which polarises the world into values, virtues and villains. This dramatic mode provides the basis of most Australian films, from *Mouth to Mouth* and *The Killing of Angel Street* to *Gallipoli* and *Breaker Morant*.

John Talloch has even demonstrated the melodramatic basis of the pre-World War I Australian cinema by using the methodology employed by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his analysis of fairy tales. Talloch concludes that *Jungle Woman*, *The Breaking of the Brought*, *Beneath Peter's Skin* and other films demonstrate that, while there was a dominant structural concern with the bush-city dichotomy, it was expressed in a melodramatic framework emphasising the "remarkable trans-historical and cross-cultural survival qualities of basic narrative forms".<sup>6</sup>

An aversion to or ignorance of the common ground shared by the Australian feature film and other popular cultural forms, from the past and future, results in the surprise and indignation expressed at Pauline Keel's description of the experience of watching a "mainstream" Australian film as the same as "watching an old-fashioned novel".<sup>7</sup> Similarly,



Pauline Keel: Kirk Douglas (Far East) and Suelette Dugdale (Far East) in a wedding photograph in *Newman Journal's Best Friends*.

1 *Cinema Papers*, No. 31, June 1982, p. 22.

2 *John Dugan: "Far East"*, *Cinema Papers*, No. 36, August 1982, p. 38.

4 See T. Elzevier, "Tales of Grand and Petty," *Monographs*, No. 4, p. 2, also J. Fall, *Film and the Narrative Tradition*, University of California Press, 1974, p. 2.

5 See S. Halliwell, *Tragedy and Melodrama: Forms of Experience*, University of Washington Press, 1968.

6 J. Talloch, *Australian Cinema Industry: Structure and Ideology*, George Allen and Unwin, p. 20.

7 *Cinema Papers*, No. 40, October 1982, p. 42.



*Richard and Peggy in the first "It Happened One Night" and they are probably the closest we'll get to a "Best of Friends" film*

although working from a different base, Sam Rubeke describes the American cinema as conservative, dull and conformist because:

"At best Australian films demonstrate a skill, and expertise in handling what are only rather familiar positions: established modes of narrative construction, established specifically cinematic codes, established social/commercial genres."

While Rubeke longs for a local filmmaker who will break through this dull conformity, such as Jennifer Gardiner, Jean-Marie Skolob or Mike Jayson, and Pauline Kael wants for another Ford Shepard, I would argue that such approaches tend to denigrate the achievements of the Australian cinema and fail to differentiate sufficiently among the many Australian films produced in this established narrative tradition. "Skill", "expertise", "established modes of narrative construction", "established cinematically cinematic codes" and "established social/commercial genres" become pejorative terms, and a modified suspense thriller such as *Crossing*, for example, is equated with a superb film like *Breaker*, which demonstrates a playful awareness of the conventions and techniques of the narrative cinema that guarantees suspense without alienating audience involvement in the film.

The *Best of Friends* belongs to another generative strategy which goes back to the early 1930s at least, and a cycle of films popularised by the narrative framework established in *It Happened One Night*. However, it should be recognised that this genre is only one mode of a dominant narrative system which encompasses the whole of the mainstream narrative film, it is marked by a conscious process of transgression whereby the formal order is disrupted and the elements are dispersed, resulting in the pressure to establish a new equilibrium and the consequent closure of the narrative present. There is within this system a generic specificity whereby such genre deals with this process in a different way.

*It Happened One Night* became known as a "scrabble comedy" and for the next seven or eight years many films were included under this rather vague aesthetic term. However, only a

few films were consistent with the truly naive behaviour of protagonists who found the existing social conventions too restrictive for their natural development. For example, comic films such as *Bringing Up Baby* posed hilarious riddles, such as paleontologist David Huxley (Cary Grant), into a world populated by Freudian psychologists, effeminate big game hunters, drunken Irish gentlemen, nervous and virtuous society girls, such as Susan O'Sullivan (Heavenly), who strip him of his trousers and dress him in a negligee while he searches for his missing interoculars elsewhere, his "house".

*Bringing Up Baby* was, essentially, the least successful film in the cycle, and most other screwball films were less farcical, characterised by the struggle of both characters to bring that taken and liberating into her with each other. Several other recurring narrative situations differentiated this particular species of the mainstream narrative film from other types of comedy, although the parameters were never very clear. *It Happened One Night* itself belonged to a tradition developed in the early sound period (e.g., *Frankie in Paradise*, *Design for Living* and *Bringing Up Baby*).

Perhaps the most decisive element in the development of the screwball cycle was the resurgence of the cinema in 1933 and '34. The films produced after this time were, as Andrew Sarris has aptly described, an "excess without sex". The tension and frustration in these films often derived from the repressive moral codes which acted as barriers to the fulfilment of desire, and the sexual frustration often leads to some oddball behaviour. Lucy's (Heavenly) attempts to seduce her husband Jerry (Cary Grant) into her bed before their divorce becomes final in *The Awful Truth* is testimony to this aspect of the genre.

Other recurring generic elements included the symbolic treatment of family and sex-roles, the fear that the restrictions of marriage may inhibit the protagonist's normal freedom, and the implied criticism of those social institutions which promulgate conformist tendencies in society. But aside from, or more correctly

associated with, the screwball behaviour generated by sexual frustration, the most significant aspect of the genre was the degree of sex role reversal provoked by these films.

If, as has often been stated, the cinema has played a significant role in the construction and provision of images and definitions of masculinity and femininity, then the screwball comedy has played a part in redefining the construction of films which deal only with the contradictions that face the hero in his choice between personal freedom and social commitment. In the screwball comedy, this crisis is often transferred to the heroine, and her role as the "seducing force" of mother and domesticator is no longer sustained automatically; children are rarely, if ever, an integral part of these films. The ultimate appeal is the battle between two people who are fairly evenly positioned to carry on an equal fight.

It is within this context that *The Best of Friends* and *Best Friends* can be contrasted from the point of view of changes from the pre-World War 2 cycle, and the differences between the Australian and the American film. The most apparent, and crucial, difference is that the source of the sexual frustration can no longer be traced to the repressive social context in *Best Friends* Richard (Richard) (Don Reynolds) is living with Paula McCullen (Gaille Brown) at the start of the film, while in

*The Best of Friends* Melrose (Angela Presch McCullen) is seen climbing on top of her old friend Tom (Richard) (Marilyn) after another declaration, "I like you, I need you."

Sexual frustration now has to be viewed by a peculiar situation in the Australian film. Paula takes Richard back to his home for a honeymoon with her parents yet prohibits him from sleeping with her and hence violating the room in which she grew up; also, Paula reasons, if her husband sleeps with her then her parents will think they are having sex. On the same hand, in the Australian film the intimacy of living together and the prospect of marriage in the case of the hostility and frustration, and a pregnant Melrose is determined not to let marriage ruin her 20-year friendship with Tom. The males in both films, unlike the women, are eager for marriage.

Gender social attitudes, particularly with regard to sex outside marriage, have changed much of the basis of the genre and, consequently, some of the traditional possibilities for humor. For example, in a church sequence



*Tom (Gaille Brown) and a pregnant Gail (Angela Presch McCullen) before her marriage to Richard (Richard Reynolds) in *The Best of Friends*.*

© See A. Sarris, "The Sex Comedy Without Sex", *American Film* March 1983, p. 13



Two surprising Melvins: Mary Lou (Punch McGraw) as she is about to go to bed (left) with an old boyfriend. (Right) Cary Grant. *The Best of Friends*

when Melvins explains to Tom that the doctor's wife is going to marry him, the film attempts to generate humor by contrasting between their remarks and the people in the church. When Melvins tells Tom that, "It's not some look I got program... I pushed you into it," there is a reaction-shot of three men who look up at them. Or, after telling him that she plans to keep the baby, a relieved Tom exclaims, "Thank God for that. Does it mean we can make love now?" and there is a shot of a man who stops praying and looks back at them. In the social climate of the 1930s such explicit dialogue would not have been permitted and filmmakers would have been forced to be a little more discreet; nevertheless, the comic effect was an important technique in highlighting the conservative concerns of the "liberal" behavior of the protagonists. By the time of *The Best of Friends*, the attitudes conveyed in

the church and the results that technique had less much of its impact.

The other major problem related to the difficult social context concerns the relation of the two recent films. While the early screwball films may have stretched audience credibility with a resolution that allowed the couple a crazy behavior and ensuing battles would be rationally solved by marriage at the end of the film and, given the changed attitudes to marriage since that period, the outcome on the part of the audience may well have turned to cynical disbelief, both modern films tentatively acknowledge this.

In the case of *Best Friends*, the self-conscious ending to the film occurs after a traumatic night when the people are locked together in a film studio office. After they have appeared to achieve an uneasy reconciliation, they walk out into a quaintly artificial studio scene which is

revealed to be a studio prop. In *The Best of Friends*, Tom manages to get a reluctant Melvins into church but she flouts during the wedding ceremony. This would appear to be Tom's last chance to get her on the altar, but, in a largely unnoted change of name, Melvins agrees to marry Tom when he appears to leave the wedding nap. An end title highlights the artificiality of the requests "happy ending" convention: "And They Lived Happily Ever After!" The narrative progresses from mutual attraction to going to church, to a happy ending, then over, particularly since the modern variations are denied of the class conflict, or even the rural-urban opposition, which give the conclusion of the 1930s films a dimension lacking in these two recent films.

The changed social context has also reduced the impact of the role reversal. Cary Grant is a catalyst in a lot funnier than Gracie Hunsford (assuming the latter is a virgin). Consequently, the genre has been forced to move to a more extreme position to raise an audience's eyebrows about the behavior of the people in the film. To signify the screwball world of the family and its laws, *Best Friends* shows Grant's father disapproving (on the balcony) to read his pornography, and her attack on the situation of the dance lady makes not so much sense as public; this is a long way from the supposedly eccentric behavior of the "underdog" household in *You Can't Take It With You* (1938), in which Marlin's (Lionel Barrymore) barmanic playing was intended to signal his individuality.

The difference between *The Best of Friends* and *Best Friends* is qualitative rather than quantitative. The type of film which depends on the ability of the performers and comment on this aspect must be rather subjective. For example, I would argue that Cary Grant was nearly indispensable to the genre as was a small group of 1930s comic actors: Carol Lombard, Jean Arthur, Ronald Russell, and Myrna Loy.<sup>10</sup> Angela Punch McGraw, on the other hand, does not appear naturally comfortable in her role and, although Gracie Hunsford fits into the genre, her Alvin Purple persona of nearly a decade ago still haunts the film. However, in *Best Friends* the self-referential qualities of Bert Reynolds (particularly when taking a story to his disinterested dog) and Goldie Hawn (who tells Bert that she often tells her parents off in her room so that she won't be sorry when they die. "That's how much I love them") are probably the closest one is going to get to Grant and the comedienne who dominated the genre in the '30s.

Films of this type also rely heavily on the quality of the dialogue, and David MacDonald's script for *The Best of Friends* contains several funny, insightful lines. For example, Melvins' mother (Beth Brickwood) tells her daughter that she has settled for second best, "a Catholic acquaintance," or Tom's remark that he "knows nine couples that are getting divorced. Well two, the ones are Catholic." The humorous occurrence of religion in the film (Catholic versus Protestant) is one of the few differences between the two films. Both films, however, work within the conventions of a long established genre and represent an attempt to explore the idea that marriage and an extreme responsibility, such as dirty business and dirty sex, can destroy an otherwise strong relationship. Certainly the Austen film does not deserve neglect because of its choice of narrative strategy, but then it could be wrong for I enjoyed *The Man From Snowy River*. ★



The wedding of Melvins and Tom in *The Best of Friends*. (And They Lived Happily Ever After?)





# Graeme Clifford

Interviewed by Debi Enker

Sydney-born Graeme Clifford has worked with an impressive smelley of the cinema's most innovative and exciting directors. His credits as an editor include *Nicolaus Copernicus*, *Don't Look Now* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, *Bob Rafelson's The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Sam Peckinpah's Convoy*, *Jim Sharman's The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Robert Altman's Images*. For Altman, he was also casting director on *The Long Goodbye*, casting and assistant director on *McCabe and Mrs Miller*, and assistant director and assistant editor on *That Cold Day in the Park*.

Clifford's directorial debut with *Frances* marks the emergence of a new element in his range of talents. While critical reaction to the film has been far from favorable, it must be conceded that this uncompromising portrayal of the life of *Frances Farmer* is a powerful indictment of Hollywood in particular and American institutions in general. Irrespective of any reservations one may harbor, *Frances* is a tribute to Clifford's assurance as a director and his steadfast refusal to compromise a vision.

**What was it about *Frances Farmer's* life that interested you?**

Just about everything. She believed the same kinds of things I believe, she trusted her work in the same way, she had the same feelings about authority, religion, Hollywood, Broadway, politics and life in general. I felt very much akin to her and was appalled by what had happened.

There are three major things I wanted to convey with the film. First was the outrage and anger in what had happened. It was an event that never subsided and kept coming out on until I got the film made. No one wanted to make it, no one wanted to finance it because it was seen as non-commercial, depressing. Second was the struggle that most people make to try to become individuals, which is really all *Frances* is trying to do in a world that is becoming increasingly repressive and de-personalized. Third was the arbitrary distinction between madmen and sanity. It has always been my opinion that some of the people in positions of authority, who supposedly are able to make

these judgments, are possibly less sane than the people they are condemning. I am not talking about the clinically insane, but about people whose behavior is somehow "different", who all seem to be covered by the amazing word "schizophrenia". When they can't figure out what is wrong with someone, they call them schizophrenic.

**Does the fact that *Frances* existed make the film impossible to dis-miss, forcing people to confront its intensity?**

I couldn't make this sort of film. I couldn't say the things I am trying to say in this picture, with a fictional story, because people wouldn't believe it. We all ought to worry about what happened to *Frances* and make sure that it doesn't happen again. I know that my film is not going to make a damn bit of difference, but sooner or later somebody is going to have to confront the problem of mental health and look at the appalling state of the institutions we have today. There are people in there who shouldn't be there; patients

who have consumed themselves because they felt they needed help, solitary patients who are not released when they ask to be released, patients who have become unreasonable because of the drugs they have been given since they were admitted. To me it is shocking, and even more so is the fact that people don't seem to want to know about it.

**Why do you refuse to allow a sense of release at the end? The obvious comparison is with a film like "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest", where the inmate's escape allows a qualified optimism . . .**

It would have been plenty to have tagged on some kind of happy ending. The fact is that the institutional period of *Frances'* life did destroy her. But the inspiring thing is the fact that she never gave in. I think that out of that sense of loss and sadness one comes a kind of release. If it causes people to be a little more compassionate than it will have made some difference.

**You have called the film 'a triumph of the human spirit' . . .**

Yes, to me it is. It is wonderfully triumphant.

**But the image of her at the end, with her face like a skeleton, makes her so lifeless. It seemed that a human being had been totally annihilated . . .**

Well, I suppose you are right. What I mean by a "triumph of the spirit" is that, although they wrecked her life, they didn't break her spirit. The fact that she stayed alive was a triumph, any normal person would have been dead after seven years in that place.

A recent edition of "Screen International" says that after you decided to make "Frances" you returned to the U.S. to find three television networks willing to make the film, three plays about to start production and several independent film makers interested in *Frances Farmer's* life. Why did all those people respond to it in the same way?

I think it is because *Frances Farmer* had gone largely unnoticed prior to that. She appeared in odd chapters of Kenneth Anger's book, *Hollywood Babylon*, and a few people knew about her life, but not many people had bothered to research it. When they did, they discovered a fascinating story. Coppola was interested, Noel Marshall was going to do a picture of it and there were these Broadway plays in the works. But the first company to announce the project was Brookfield, the people I made the picture for, and they had announced it independently.

I was introduced to the producer, Jonathan Sanger, and we both recognized that we wanted to make the same kind of film. We both respected the woman, and we both wanted to treat it with as much integrity as possible, even though the story itself was totally outrageous and shocking. So I persuaded Jonathan to let me in on the director. I knew that working with him would be a good experience because he had just produced *The Elephant Man*, which I love, Eric Berglund and Chris [de Vore] were doing the screenplay, and, as I had loved their screenplay for *The Elephant Man*, I thought the set-up couldn't be better.

**Do you see similarities between "Frances" and "The Elephant Man"?**

I have never thought about that connection, but there is an obvious similarity between the emotional content of both films. They are about people who were extraordinary, and both are rather sad. They both deal with greedy troubled lives that cause under a great deal of pressure (from society at large, and under of them) had a happy ending.

**The film creates a third surrogate, Nicholas Kazan. What role did he play?**

Chris and Eric finally burnt out, after six drafts. I needed something I wasn't getting from them, so I brought Nick in. He wrote the first shooting draft of the screenplay, and also contributed the



Frances Farmer (Jessica Lange) and Clifford Deane (Jeffrey DeMunn) *Greene Clifford's Frances*

highlighter scene and the last scene of the film.

**At what stage did you cast Jessica Lange?**

I cast her before I was even hired by Jonathan Sanger. I knew that if I was going to make this film, she would play the part. I knew that no matter how compelling the story was, I wouldn't have a picture without Jessica's performance. She felt as strongly about Frances as I did.

**What about Sam Shepard?**

I have always loved Sam, ever since I saw *Days of Heaven*. I think he is a wonderfully enigmatic actor, and I wanted somebody like that for the role of Macy York. Based on a man named Stuart Jacobson, he is a difficult role, somewhat as he only steps up in the film from time to time in her life. There may be several years between one scene and the next, and you never know what he has been doing in the interim. I thought that he and Jessica would go along wonderfully well together and make a good pair on screen. I felt you needed to feel an immediate attraction between them so you didn't need to spend time building up that relationship.

**Why is Macy York the film's narrator?**

That was never meant to be part of the film and I wish it wasn't. I allowed myself to be convinced to take scenes out of the picture in order to make it shorter. Most of the missing scenes were at the beginning. They set up a relationship between Frances and her mother much better than it is at the moment. There was a good scene between the mother and the father which delineated their positions more clearly. You saw Frances

meeting her husband instead of his suddenly being among you in Seattle, as he is now. I was persuaded to take those guys out was a big mistake and I will never let it happen again. I had to use the narration to cover for the loss of those scenes. Hopefully, when the film is shown on cable television in the U.S., those scenes will be reinstated and the film will be 13 minutes longer. At least somebody somewhere will use it in the format in which I want it to be shown.

Frances' marriage seems to be symptomatic of a larger problem because, paradoxically, when the men or events she is being self-destructive rather than productive...

I think that is true, and that it is true of many people. I have to stop myself from being self-destructive. I find it very easy, almost easier than anything else in the world. It is a result of ignorance with the stupidity that you see around you, and you just react emotionally. Sam Peckinpach, for instance, one of the most brilliant directors in the U.S., is a terribly self-destructive man. So are a lot of great producers and musicians. It seems to go hand in hand with the creative process. You have to push yourself to the limit, look over the edge to see what is there, then go over further than that. So you push people, and you push yourself to make people react. You drop something into a conversation, which is totally outrageous, just to get a rise out of them. Once that self-destructive mechanism is triggered, it is difficult to keep in check. Frances couldn't keep it in check and went that little bit further than most of us are permitted to go. That is what made her very interesting to me.

You mentioned Peckinpach and you have worked with other similarly insensitive directors. Robert

Altman, Nicolas Rung and Rush Rifkin. How do you think they have influenced your work as a director?

I could give you simplistic answers to that question, but I cannot, you know, it is more complicated than that. You learn all sorts of things from different people, one of the reasons I worked with these people was because they are all individuals, and all are self-destructive, they push their art to the limit. It is exciting to me, and I like to work with exciting people. They make films that I want to watch, films that make me sit up and listen, and make me feel something. I don't feel as if I am wasting time. When I see a film, I want to find out something I didn't know before.

**How did you research the film?**

We hired an independent researcher and then I took so many people as I could. Stuart Jacobson, actor who worked with her, Edith Head, who did a lot of her costumes, Elia Kazan, who directed her, and her first husband, Lott Liskens. Even the distance from the doctor who performs the lobotomy is used for research, taken from first prize accounts of his demonstration. A lot of O'Brien's dialogue was adapted from interviews he gave about his views on acting and writing.

This dialogue was my most valuable asset because it formed a personality to my head. Because her story is so fantastic, I had to concentrate much of my attention on emphasizing the fact that the film is based on a true story.

**Did you use any information from her autobiography?**



Frances, at age 43, on *This Is Your Life* with Ralph Edwards (Robert Cray) *Frances*

Plenty don't waste your money buying it. *What They Really Did to A Woman?* is a phony autobiography, actually written by Jean Ruchette, and to a large extent inaccurate and untrustworthy. The fact that it was attributed to Frances Farmer would make her turn in her grave. It is the ultimate insult. Ruchette wrote a letter to Frances but died, having lived with her during the last years of her life, and then, in an inspired piece of humility, dedicated the book to herself. I find it terribly despicable that even after her death Frances is being exploited.

Bookchin bought the real autobiography which was attributed because she died before it was completed. She was writing that with a lady named Len Kibby, who would never permit its publication because she didn't feel it was complete. We bought the rights to it on the understanding that it would not be published.

The charge about Frances Farmer's life is one of the facts will never be known. There is room for different interpretations of what happened to Frances and why.

**The film depicts Hollywood as being completely hostile to Frances. Was Howard Hawks either the greatest actors with whom he ever worked...**

Frances claimed that Hawks was one of the few admirable directors — he and Alfred Hitchcock. She mentioned both with fond memories.

**The laparotomy given in the film is that the doctor's "Cane and Get It" very highly...**

That is because it wasn't finished by Hawks; he was fired half way through the shooting, by Sam

Goldwyn, because he insisted on making a film that was faithful to the book. Goldwyn likes Mabel Wilkes Wyler who followed the dictates of the studio and stuck a happy ending on it. Believe it or not, there were discussions during the making of *Frances* about turning it on a happy ending, which totally appalled me. You are bound to have the subject come up in Hollywood because they always want to make people happy. They don't want to make anyone unhappy — parish the thought! There must be reason in our film-making community for films that don't necessarily have happy endings because many lives don't. If everybody just stuck films with happy endings, then we would have just one kind of film. I don't think Sophie's Choice has a particularly happy ending. *Frances* is obviously one of that group.

The depiction of Hollywood, in fact most of the institutions in the film, is very damning. Given that there were people in Hollywood like Hawks who had some respect for *Frances* as an actress, why is it that you don't get the sense of a single person being able to appreciate anything about her other than "good tits"?

I had to deal with Hollywood briefly, and, though there were people in Hollywood who did appreciate her, they were few and far between. It is unfortunate and I know that it is probably not presenting a balanced view of Hollywood, but you have to go with the general feeling, which was that they were trying to force her to do things she didn't want to do. The scripts were terrible, they didn't care whether the wardrobe was accurate or not, in short, they

attributed no intelligence to the audience. Film was still a relatively new medium and novel was particularly fresh. They could get away with anything. *Frances* attributed more intelligence to the audience than the studios did, and she couldn't justify giving them garbage.

Most of the characters who represent institutions in the film demonstrate easily reprehensible attitudes.

Don't you find that in life? Anywhere you get a large bureaucracy, you get a slew of people who are just doing what they are told, mostly without question. I guess they are happy just to have a job. I wish we could go back to the days when people meant something.

In the U.S., they have this depressing phrase that they use at the end of every sentence: "Have a nice day." I find it totally appalling. The phrase is meaningless. I have asked people in hotels and restaurants why they say, "Have a nice day", and they tell me the management likes them to say that. I go away thinking, "My God, this person is being drained of my human thought or emotion."

Organized religion does the same thing. I asked for some questions at the same period in my life that *Frances* Farmer did. I left my church because I felt it had no relevance whatsoever to my life and was trying to teach me to become another white sheep in an already all-white flock. As soon as you asked difficult questions of the ministers, they managed to evade the answers. That is all *Frances* was trying to point out in her essay at the beginning of the film.



The real Frances Farmer

The way in which the film is cut seems deliberately jarring, particularly in sequences that cut from one city to another. For example, the cut from the lost scene on the beach in Seattle to the Hollywood nightclub, or the cut from Odette's apartment in New York to *Frances* on set in Hollywood, comes a sense of two completely different environments confronting each other. Did you intend that sense of dislocation?

Yes. There is no point in my elaborating on that, because you have just said it!

The impression of public housing seems central to the film. So many of its conversations take place in streets that it has the feeling of a long and harrowing journey . . .

I set some of those scenes in streets for that reason. I wanted to put the feeling of public housing but without any real connection, not just between Harry and *Frances* but also between her and the others. He developed one way and she developed in another way. Their lives came together at various points, but they were never meant to be together.

The music seems to be used to reflect her state of mind, particularly the Mozart. Was that your intention?

Yes. If you listen closely, there is also a theme for Harry. It is not very obvious, but the film is meant to be Harry and the har-

monies is meant to be *Frances*. I am sorry that the music hasn't been recognized for what it is, because it is a brilliant piece of composing on John Barry's part. I am a little upset that some critics haven't mentioned him. László Kossuth, the cinematographer, Dick Sylbert's production design, or John Wray, my editor. I am very happy that *Frances* and Ken Stacey have been recognized, but other people who contributed a huge amount to this film have gone totally unnoticed. As good as *Frances*' performance is, it is only one part of the film.

Why didn't you cut it yourself?

As an editor, I have always appreciated giving the director another point of view. Therefore, as a director, I would never deprive myself of this opportunity. I think an editor is the most valuable and come a director has, and I would be a fool not to give myself that same opportunity.

You have paid a great deal of attention to props, particularly mirrors and photographs . . .

Yes, I think you can understand the story by placing mirrors throughout certain positions in the background. The last of *Frances* was in Clifford Odets' apartment because he was once quoted as saying he thought he was then having schizophrenia. He used to say that the world lost a great composer when he decided to be a

*Continued on p. 189*



Frances and Barry (from *Shogun*). *Frances*



# THE DISMISSAL

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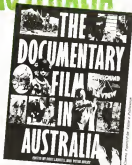
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*Do you want a good movie, or a lion on your lap?  
The peculiar history and uncertain future of the'*

# STEREOSCOPIC FILM

Fred Harden

I can confidently predict (as others just as enthusiastic and improperly qualified confidently predicted in 1875 and 1903) that 1925 is the year when 3-D film will finally fulfil the promise that no less a visionary and disbeliever than Sergei Eisenstein predicted for it in 1904.

In an essay on stereoscopic cinema (presumably written after seeing the 1917 Russian 3-D film *Requiem for a Dancer*) Eisenstein said:

"Not in any other art — throughout the whole of history — can there be an influence so dynamic and perfect of volume being translated into space, and space into volume, both penetrating into each other, existing simultaneously, and still within the process of vast movement."

"There is no need to fear the advance of this new art: still less — to laugh at its fate, as our spectators laughed, throwing lumps of mud at the first exhibitor."

A glass must be pressed in consequence for the arrival of new cinema which, multiplied by the possibilities of new techniques, will demand new technique for the expression of these new depths in the marvellous creations of the future.

"To open the way for them is a great and sacred task, and all those who dare to designate themselves as artists are called upon to participate in its accomplishment."

In contrast to the importance of the possibilities of a three-dimensional cinema as a fine art is the fact that a badly acted, technically-poor soft-core porno movie, *The Showbusiness*, is the top grossing 3-D film having lost less than £100,000 to make in 1926 and grossing more than \$28 million.

Here lies the paradox of the stereoscopic cinema. Firstly two per cent of us perceive the world in three dimensions, yet we have evolved a sophisticated world where our art and communication are dominated by print film and television images that are safely contained on a flat plane of two dimensions.

There appears to be something fascinating in the perception of stereoscopic images that keeps thousands experimenting with 3-D films being made in approximately ten great cities for superior (or is it the) experience. The following article is an attempt to distil (if the history and nature of 3-D film from many sources, and to lead the readers for the rise and fall of a cinema that promised nothing less than "a lion in your arms and a lion in your lap".

I have chosen to rely on two important books that have been released recently.

- *Larry Lipson's Foundations of the Stereoscopic Cinema* — A study in depth, published in 1982 by Van Nostrand Reinhold, and distributed by Thomas Nelson Australia. (The recommended retail price is \$29.95. (See review below).)
- *Amazing 3-D* by Don Symmes and book designer Ian Morgan is published by Little, Brown and Company. My copy was \$11.95 from Space Age Bookshop, Melbourne. The book is a heavily-illustrated (in two-colour 3-D with glasses supplied) look at the popular picture

media of 3-D movies, still photography and comics, with full-colour reproductions of posters at many of the early 3-D films.

## 3-Diventa. The Peculiar History of 3-D

The fact that one sees objects in depth — the reason being that our two eyes see different images which are fused by our brain into a very solid and coherent whole — has been noted and then minutely theorised about by many, including Euclid, Plato, Galen, Agoricus, and Leonardo da Vinci. Johannes Kepler who was myopic and suffered from colour vision offered by theory in 1611. Giovanni Battista Pictet, a Neapolitan physicist, wrote in 1660, and the Florentine painter Jacopo Chimenti has left painted stereo pairs without any idea of his viewing system.

Then theoretical writing in illustration adding to the problem of "doubtless of vision" left the problem unsolved until 1838, when physicist Charles Wheatstone explained that this visual capacity actually gave people stereo vision. His *Contributions to the Physiology of Vision — Part I: The First Chapter on Stereoscopic and Artists' Unobserved Phenomena of Binocular Vision* included the first published stereo drawings and an explanation of the mirror stereoscope that he invented in 1833. About six months after his *Journal* was published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, John Talbot announced his early photographic process that produced paper print stereo photographs. Talbot was aware by Wheatstone's lead some stereoscopic photographs and etched with a number of stereo portraits and pictures of buildings and villages.

Wheatstone welcomed the camera and the discoveries of Meade, Daguerre and Talbot which could accomplish greater stereo realism than was possible by any artist, but he did not work overly eager to publish. His further developments of his equipment (first the Babinet appeared in 1860). His mirror stereoscope is illustrated below. These early photographic stereo pairs were taken with a single

camera that was moved two-and-a-half inches (6.3 cm) for the second exposure, this being the average distance of the separation between people's eyes.

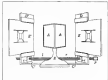
So David Brewster took Wheatstone's idea and designed a camera with two lenses and a stereoscopic viewer that also used lenses to allow the viewer's eyes to focus more easily on a smaller stereo pair. Queen Victoria was excited by the new invention as the 1851 London Exhibition and



Brewster was quick to make her a gift of one of his stereoscopes and some stereo 'views'. The newspapers reported this stereo gesture making the new invention immediately acceptable to millions of Victorian ladies.

The popular success of the stereoscopic views (which were often hand-colored) was a phenomenon that lasted more than a decade until, as one historian suggests, the photographic reproductions in books and magazines took over the photo-journalism role that the stereoscopic views of the arts and outposts of the frontier had provided. The inventive quality of this process is evident in many of the photographs that exist today and there are still many talented stereophotography enthusiasts working with modern cameras and filmstocks.

The change from still images to stereo motion pictures was marked by a number of mistakes that used inaccurately-powered still pictures, shown in 'flat-book' form or in turn-peggled frames.





Edward Muybridge produced many three-dimensional photographs between 1860 and 1870 before his famous series of sequential photographs of a galloping horse started his career in cinematography. It is William Friese-Greene who is credited with adapting Edison's invention of the motion picture camera to make real-time stereo film in 1895. Edison and his talented assistant Dickson liked only attempts for stereoscopic motion picture cameras in 1895, and Dickson alone did so in 1898. Edison's initial evidence that cinema was a perceptual device was in keeping with the stereo viewer, but it meant that it was up to others to work out how to show these images successfully to a large audience.

Audiences in France had been able to watch all images projected using an anaglyphic process (from the Latin *ana*, up, and *graphia*, to add or engrave, hence, to make in relief) since 1855. Joseph d'Arville in France had projected two pictures superimposed on a screen through an orange and a blue filter respectively and the audience viewed them through orange and blue glasses. The process is the same as one used today where the image for one eye is colored red and is followed green by the other. The red colored image is not visible when viewed through the red lens but the green colored image appears black. The green image when viewed through the green colored lens gives a similar effect, making only the red image visible to that eye. This successfully presents separate left and right images that contain to the depth cues the brain expects for perception of 3-D. (As an explanation of the complex process of perception of depth see "Further Reading" at the end of this article.)

It is difficult to determine the first public 3-D presentation but there is a newspaper report of a screening at the Astor Theatre in New York, on June 10, 1915, of an anaglyphic program of scenes of the streets of New York and New Jersey taken by William E. Wadsworth and Edwin S. Porter in common for Edison who turned director and is best known for his film *The Great Train Robbery* in 1901.

The other type of viewing method proposed at the time (and one of the 3-D techniques presently being developed using sophisticated electronic techniques) uses the action, "The future in depth" is the idea of an "incubating" theater. This is worn or held by the viewer and comprises a projector so that when the left eye image is being shown the shutter is open on that eye and closed on the other, and vice versa. This idea depends on the persistence of vision and needs quite substantial wall images but it had a curious nipping and tugging when showing movement. It did, however, allow full color presentation although it was some years before it was achieved successfully. It was abandoned as "Television, a specially equipped theatre in New York, on December 27, 1922, and was well-received. However, the complex equipment was impractical to install.



For many years the anaglyphic process depended on synchronizing two interlocked projections, but the interlocked multi-screen work of Noel Dance showed that the technique was much simpler. Noel Dance shot portions of his 1908 three-camera silent *Napoleonic* in anaglyphic stereo, but chose not to include them in the final version. There was an earlier anaglyphic single projection method made possible by printing black and white images on to one filmstrip with either a dye-transfer or matrix process. One also used a double-reel print film with emulsion on the back. It is now done easily by printing on to color stock through filters.)

The introduction of modern triplex color film made possible systems like the Triangle twin-lens process (and before that Mike Browning's description of this process) but it still is restricted in the use of a full color spectrum, reducing it to those colors from a mixture of the two colors. The advantage of this method of anaglyphic stereoscopy remains the ease of single-lens projection.

## Polarizing Filters and Adding Color

Because the most frequently used 3-D process today is a polarized one, the assumption is that it is a recent invention. In fact, there is an 1881 American patent for the use of polarized light in selecting images for stereoscopic projection. But the polarizing materials were all too crude or expensive until Edwin H. Land, and what is now the Polaroid Corporation, made high-quality sheets polarized available in 1930. In a demonstration for the Society of Motion Picture Engineers in 1939, Land and his associates showed 16 mm black and white and full color stereoscopic films taken on the very Kodachrome film that Kodak had introduced in the 16 mm format less than a year before. Unlike earlier chemical crystalline products, the Land polarizer is made "by absorbing iodine in a sheet of thin polyvinyl alcohol that has been stretched to align the molecules in long parallel chains."

These parallel chains only pass light aligned in the same plane, a familiar process with the use of polarized sunglasses and camera films.



The standard definition for projection is with the left and right eye images polarized at 90-degrees to each other but on an angle of 45 degrees to the horizontal. This method presents the separate images to a viewer wearing glasses similarly arranged. The polarizing material is a neutral gray and, although it reduces the amount of transmitted light, a maximum full color presentation is possible.

The first (and many subsequent) polarizing systems used two interlocked cameras in a side-by-side configuration or with one camera shooting through a semi-silvered mirror and the other shooting the reflected image from its surface less directly. By adjusting the angles slightly, the two cameras' fields of view cross over, or are made to converge, similar to what happens when one looks at an object. The other important adjustment is the distance between the centers or axes of the lenses. This "interocular" distance is modified to alter the "depth" between planes in that different lenses and eye-lens distances between subjects.



The size of the early two-camera systems (on the illustration of the huge Nagasaki-Vinson system) would appear to be a major disadvantage. This does not seem to have prevented mass production techniques and, an 3-D often requires more careful setups to get full impact from the images, the task of which had probably not been reported not a problem.

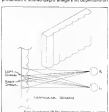
## The Films and the Filmmakers

The introduction of polarized anaglyphic film did not mean the end of anaglyphic processes. For reasons mentioned above, it was a simple and effective process, but the world of color 3-D was waiting for a successful polarized system. Filmmakers who had used the earlier process had few problems in changing to the polarized method. Frederic Eugene Ives and Jacob Leventhal, working from a studio in Fort Lee, New Jersey, had produced five anaglyphic shorts that had limited release in 1920 under the collection title, *Stereoscopes*.

When the partnership dissolved, Leventhal paired with John Horing to make several unrelated short sequences which they sold to MGM. Peter Smith was in charge of shorts at the time and purchased them into an anaglyphic short, *Audioscopes*, in 1930. Leventhal and Horing then made *The New Audioscopes*, released in 1930, and their success convinced MGM to allow Smith to direct his anaglyphic *Frankenstein* print. Third *Dimension* in 1931.

Horing then made one of the 3-D films that seem to have had the most impact at the time. The Chrysler Motors Corporation commissioned a 15-minute promotional film for its display at the 1939 New York World's Fair. With technical assistance from Powers of the high-quality black and white film, in *Taste with Taste*, Horing and Smith may have been a million-and-a-half people and was successfully remade in color to attract further audiences in the 1940 World's Fair.

In Europe, polarized films were made in Italy. *Blaise Cendrars* (in 1930) and Germany's first 3-D color feature *Zum gelben hell* (*Has Can Meanly Tough*) in 1931. The Soviet Union had been experimenting with anaglyphic, sunglasses and powered processes since the mid-1920s and had decided that the discomfort to the viewer of glasses could be solved by a binocular stereo process (see illustration). This successfully presented a limited depth image that depended on



a properly-positioned audience keeping their heads perfectly upright to see the effect. Soviet *Stenobinocular* is a film in a considerable inventory and its 20 mm powered process presented a relatively 3-D feature, with a regular production rate of at least one feature a year.

The audience for 3-D film was often content to put up with badly-regulated two-dimensional features and anaglyphic glasses to view the new *World War 2* 3-D production created for strategic use in several foreign areas and during, and public interest in 3-D turned to still photography.









## Foundations of the Stereoscopic Cinema: a study in depth

Lenny Lipson

Van Nostrand Reinhold, distributed in Australia by Thomas Nelson Australia  
Rrp. \$29.95

"It was 1952 and I was twelve years old. I bought a 3-D comic book about a Justice Age hero who used an ion-to-collider disintegrator. I wore unframed glasses to see the illustrations in proper 3-D. The graphs had red and blue filters. After looking at the pictures for some time I noticed that I was seeing the world through a new eye and switch to the other. This occurred when I took off the glasses and looked toward the backdrops and caused one of my pupils from now, years later I will thank my eye to see if it is trained like binoculars a happened. Could Mother have been correct? Did those comic books really train my eyes?"

In the same way as Lenny Lipson describes it with this paragraph taken from the preface to his new book, I found my childhood fascination with 3-D comic books (although the one I remember best was *Wheely Mouse*), and I also read (with great success) to make my own 3-D drawings with colored pencils. After reading Lipson's book, I have a renewed interest in 3-D and have been inspired to repeat the experience and try some 3-D with film photography.

The inspiration is not just the result of Lipson's useful friendly and informative writing

style that made a success of his previous book, *Independent Filmmaking* and *The Super 8 Book* (which are still recommended, even though some of the equipment information is now in need of revision).

*Foundations of the Stereoscopic Cinema* is a most brilliant work, with dozens of formulas and charts that illustrate the work of many different 3-D experimenters, with Lipson's own valuable comments from his work over many years. He acknowledges and deals with the expectations of readers of his earlier books in this way:

"Readers of my other books may be in for a surprise. This is a more difficult book, and a warning: it is not for those who may have certain aspects of a how-to-do-it book, the major portion is, by its content, a photographic processing manual research Reader seeking a more simplified approach are referred to *Lipson on Filmmaking* (Oxford and Bloomer, 1979), which contains a how-to-do-it section devoted to some of the tools used in this study.

The early portions of the book are repeated and elaborated. It was necessary to discuss some of the background, since stereoscopy is an interdisciplinary art, yet later had to be done. For example, topography is used to obtain some results, but obviously this is not a handbook on land topography. The mathematics are on an advanced high school, or perhaps freshman college, level. Some readers will shudder through the book and challenge this conclusion. For them and for the reader in a hurry, the results of mathematical derivations may be accepted at face value, and I have included to explain all concepts in simple English.

"I admit that I have had a difficult time

deciding on the proper tone or level of difficulty of this book. It has been my desire to reach the greatest number of readers, I am hopeful that filmmakers will take up the call to this stereoscopic filmmaking will proliferate. For the state of the art is such that large chunks of basic information have not until now existed. I had to invent or discover what the reader now has in hand. This book, like my others, contains the information that I needed to know in the years before I wrote it."

I can recommend this book as the only complete overview of stereo medium genres techniques, and a well contents help make the principles as 3-D seems to apply for filmmakers involved in 3-D film production. Lipson discusses the analogies between as learning and nonlearning, and has as strong preference for full-color, polarized systems. He has not mentioned the hybrid analogies analogies systems described below but the book has, given its publication date, probably the best bibliography of articles and books on stereoscopy.

Not included in this list was the recent piece Lipson has written for *American Cinematographer* (October 1983) discussing his involvement in filming the 3-D film, *Robyn Miller*, and the article by his brother, Arthur Miller, in the same issue, "The rebirth of 3-D". The section in the book on 3-D television is very short and does not mention the considerable amount of activity in Europe, Japan and the U.S. since 1961.

So, use the book as an important introduction to the principles of 3-D photography and for at charts and formulas but watch other sources for up-to-date developments as yet another 3-D boom reawakens. ★

F.H.

Although polarized 3-D will be the standard requirement for presentation in theatres, broadcast television, which requires a compatible picture for those viewers who don't have or choose not to wear glasses, has to find a different method. The system that seems to have been most successful in overseas experiments was developed by Jim Butterfield and Bud Alger of the Hollywood company 3-D Video Corporation. Their system was used in the British experiments in November 1982, and they have been arranging live broadcasts in the U.S.

The 3-D Video process has been used to transfer many of the mid-1950s 3-D films to videotape for videocassette and cable presentation. The system uses a pale blue and dark red color combination for the glasses which gives an almost full color view from one eye and a monochrome image from the other. That, apparently, is enough to block the slight fringing encoded in the picture and convince the brain it is seeing a 3-D image. The effect has been reported to be excellent.

It is interesting to see references in the articles appearing overseas to the successful broadcasts of 3-D

television in Australia, the result of press reports of experiments carried out by Mike Browning and Volk Mol in Melbourne. The overseas reports have been premature as the system is yet to have its first (acknowledged) broadcasts. The industry gossip about their Triangle 3-D system had almost been forgotten until the announcement that Alex Stitt's new animated feature *Abra Cadabra* was being filmed in the process. With the arrival of the Lenny Lipson and *Amazing 3-D* books, the feature *Comin' At Ya*, and the announcement about *Abra Cadabra*, my interest in 3-D film and television was aroused.

The following interviews are with Volk Mol, a respected Melbourne cinematographer, Mike Browning, who has been directing documentaries and television commercials for two decades, and Alexander Stitt, who moves from animated commercials to full-length features with equal success. They explain the differences and unique qualities of their 3-D system and Philip Adams adds the news that soon we will be able to judge the results for ourselves.



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# Mike Browning



Can you explain the technical requirements of the Triangle 3-D process?

The only special equipment required is a modification of the camera lens; the rest of the process remains the same. Once the image is on film or tape, you can project or transmit it normally.

It is essentially an anastigmat process dependent on two specially-colored filter elements fixed inside the lens. There is a main lens, consisting of a white keyring and two filters, but no circular iris; instead, there is a horizontal light valve which moves like a venetian blind.

When the stage is sharp and in focus the cylinder lens from the focus is moved evenly with the natural (white) light coming through the lens, and all the points of focus are on the film plane. Obviously, when you change focus, you move those points of focus on different positions, and the result is a color fringe on the out-of-focus parts of the image.

There is a blue fringe on one side and a red fringe on the other. They

are not true blue and red, they are a mild peach-orange and the red is a slight magenta. By wearing glasses with these two colors you are blocking and contrasting the fringes and, unless you are slightly color blind, you see an image in depth.

Although the images are quite normal in color without the glasses, the system does depend on that "blocking" of some of the natural color to be able to see the 3-D. Yet the refraction in color with the glasses on seemed acceptable. The flick lines in particular were very good . . .

Because the colors are so mild, within a matter of 10 seconds you forget the glasses, and the eyes start just to flick back seeing normal color. It is like watching a pale pastel picture, or a great in Hollywood MGM Monocolor, it looks unnatural at first but you get used to it. You are okay as long as you don't keep taking off the glasses; when you do, you realize that you have been looking at two

colors because the eye that has been seeing one color sees the world more in the opposite shade for a while. You don't realize the two color lens used you have been wearing the glasses for 10 minutes and taken them off.

"Canest color" is very subjective. Here are more cues on depth we use for the current perception of color which are almost as subtle as the cues for perceiving depth . . .

Yes, things like dominant lines, and perspective. Take Alex Sini's *Phantom* cartoon as an example. Because the actual characters and scenery are two-dimensional and because they are drawings, the system is provided at its best; it has to rely mainly on the distance between the planes. In live action, I can freeze it for the best 3-D, and there is movement as the focus or lighting to take advantage of the effect, but with a sketch it must be constructed.

Does the same Triangle have any special significance?

It is three dimensions, three angles, and there were three people involved in the patent. It seemed as good a name as any other.

The three people were yourself, Volk Mail and . . . ?

John Taylor. When I sold Radio Corporation to John, I became executive producer on contract to John's company, River side. Volk was lighting cameraman, also under contract.

John's share of the patent was bought out by Philip Adams, who later bought out our shares in exchange for a percentage of the success. We now have to wait for the action? The holder of the patent is Televisual Digital Systems.

Unfortunately, Philip Adams was ill and not able to comment on the application of the process and the story of the development of the Triangle system. We did receive the following information in reply to an early request:

All I want to say is that we'll be going to see with a state of 3-D quickly during the latter part of 1985 and I have, like you, solved the lens remaining problem. It is, how to non-diffract glasses. I can't reveal the Machiavellian methodology, but I will be able to put a lot of clients into the hands of U.S. million Americans as was the reason Quora a full order.

I've been a 3-D buff since childhood. As a kid I invented a system that didn't require glasses and was so successful I discovered that the Russians had come to exactly the same technical conclusions. And just made a little in my system. So 30 years later, when I bought the rights for Mike and Volk's process, I

What are the differences between the Triangle system and the Video West patent?

Their system was very basic. The patent only says that the process depends on two filters fitted inside the lens, but that was enough to prevent us from patenting ours in the U.S. The examples I have are CinemaScope tests, a workprint of John Andrews sailing around her backyard and swimming pool. One side of the screen is red and one side blue, and there is a heavy fringe. Our system uses carefully-shaped filters and has our special light valve.

Does the fringe disappear as you stop down?

The advantage of the horizontal iris is that you can stop down and the fringe remains the same. Even at f22 you get the fringes at the sides of the object.

How complicated is it to get good 3-D results?

It is much simpler, of course, on tape because you can see the effect immediately and build up what you want. With careful air direction, it should be possible for any director to get good 3-D results — it is as easy as sex. On the sample tape with *Don Lane* it was very simple. We taped it at 2 in. on Channel 3, and the camera operators easily worked out what focus adjustments were required and were very excited by the system. It is the simplest and I feel the most natural of the 3-D systems.

I still remember Philip's comment after seeing the original tests. We were standing in the control room and everyone was watching the banks of monitors, wearing their glasses and jumping up and down. But he just turned to me and said, "Do you like Danny's Club?" ★

should have been ready for the show. Their system was not in the U.S. — that a virtually identical system had been invented in exactly the same time by an American scientist. Although the American system dates back as far as Mike and Volk's, the patent effectively blockaded it. It was owned by Mike Edwards and John Andrews and I had to buy their patent out.

The inventor of the system is a very lovely Vol and Mike's best work modifications created by a team of scientists I gathered together in New York and at Florida. These include a method that we discuss that movement depth perception while manipulating "fringe" and more subtle, induced lines for the special effects. All in all, over 200 patents, inventions and "visual psychologies" contributed to the program. Although Volk and Mike certainly deserve credit for 90 per cent of what is I believe, a remarkable breakthrough. (December 86, 1982) ★



# WOK MO!

Mike Browning mentioned that your first experiments with 3-D were in 1977 while you were back working at Riverside Studios. Can you remember what prompted those experiments?

It was a combination of things. I like to tinker around with lenses and I was fascinated by what is described as the nodal point of the lens, where the aperture is. I found that it was like a camera chamber. I did a bit of fiddling around with color and things to see what would happen. I also had an enlarger that had a focusing system with, I think, red, blue and green filters in it. I don't have a copy more, but when it was out of focus the colors would shift a little. If it were in focus, it would be white.

At that time, I was making something about the red and blue given 3-D pictures and I thought, "That's interesting, maybe that's a way to build up the principle." I used an SX-70 camera and some filters from a Kodak sample book, and took some pictures that I thought were interesting, which I showed to Mike. We live in the country only about a mile from each other. He looked at them and at me and said, "I think you have something here." I thought he might have been joking but he was serious, so I pulled an old Kodak Instamatic lens apart and then some film with it. He was thinking more of the technical aspects, such as colors of the filters and glasses, while I was concerned with perfecting the technique. If you only see two colors in the moving chamber it is not as good as when you see white light as well. It took a while to discover that.

Fortunately, I had worked for years with Mike and he too conceptual applications that I hadn't given much thought to. This is where we have worked together over the years. There was money available to develop it a bit further, so we did a lot of tests on film and three stills, and at this stage Philip Adams became interested.

Philip is probably a genius in his own brand of the spectrum. He immediately has a very strong mind about marketing, and at that time

he was probably the perfect and only man to get the thing off the ground. He made lots of the early arrangements.

There was another partner, John Taylor.

John was the managing director of Riverside. That project was only a sideline, something we did when there was nothing else. Admittedly it cost him a fair amount of money — \$10,000 to \$20,000 — but the arrangement was that he alone would be paid off. So, although we didn't make any money out of it then, he did!

I think you know the story about the expert from the U.S. who came to judge the value of the system. He was wearing glasses that looked like clear curtains cut in half and had to stand a foot away from the screen. He thought it was a great thing. He had the comment in the U.S. and concluded that although it was a simple system and working it could always be made better.

So, a lot of money and three years were spent by the Americans to make it better, which didn't work. Mike and I knew it wouldn't work and, if you place the module as it is today in Alan's lens beside our first one, you would see it is virtually the same.

What about the horizontal lens?



That was actually one of the only worldwide ideas they came up with. It was very practical but sound. It was hardly worth all the money. We already perfected the idea mechanically, so that instead of a slot in the lens with two horizontal slides moving vertically up and down they are connected to the rotating aperture ring. The point is that we would contain the new ray inside the lens. It works exactly like a prism, so it reflects in an acceptable extent, the frequency on the top and the bottom of the elements. Any fringing for our purpose should be on the verticals.

Does it alter the speed of the lens, or make it harder to use?

Yes, it reduces the speed by about one-and-a-half stops, and the different mechanical system means the settings have to be re-calibrated. The shapes of the filters have been worked out mathematically to run in the right amount with ordinary light. You need very little fringing and it is only with experience that you know when you have gone too far. Stopping down any bring other things into focus which you might not want. With a still camera you can easily change the shutter speed but with film you would have to add ND filters. There is no question about

it. If someone wanted to shoot something tomorrow, you would need some assistance to get the best result. The effect would be there but we have done hundreds of experiments to determine the best results.

To my knowledge, with all the stuff I have read, this system is still the best for television, for the simple reason that it is compatible for viewers without the glasses. Although polarized 3-D comes pretty close to being perfect, there is no simple way to use it on a single television screen using polarizing glasses. I have seen an electronic glasses system that you would plug into the back of the set, but the glasses cost about \$300 each. It is very clever and the expertise behind it is probably many times greater than ours, but it is hardly a commercial proposition.

You have to remember that the television monitor is a small picture and with any system you will still have the effect of looking out a window with some depth in it. It is specifically the size that has the impact. If you have a cinema screen that is 2.1:1 screen ratio or even smaller and 6 x 9, an academy ratio it is still quite big, and you have the effect in the theatre of being physically moved by the image. If you go smaller to a wide processor and that is television set, you end up with what is just



John joins the through 3-D processed television with Don. I am gathering into the audience.



The unpublished additions to the *Nichols Manuscript* are available online. See details in [10].

the same as a good photographic enlargement. This certainly doesn't help you give the effect of 3-D, even with the most perfect system.

Depth is partly dependent on the size. With the panning system you will get a better perception of depth because of the varying stages. Our system has only three: foreground, middle and background. It is like the comic strips in the [showing 3-D] book which I showed to Alex as a suggestion as to what some of the rules could be. Our system was designed for live action, not for the film planes. Alex doesn't draw lines around his film planes anyway. I said some time ago you can actually enhance it by artificially putting some of the comic-book effect in.

Our system remains the simplest and cheapest to introduce now. Mike and I could go into production tomorrow. There is a 60 to 1 odds already converted, we could do a film, we could shoot some tape. The major thing, for which I have no answer, is that it is not being used. Mike may underrate the reasons better than I, but when you see the magazines and all the current interest in 3-D, it should be used more! Eventually an audience

In his article on 3-D television in the December *American Cinematographer*, Daniel Serrano talks in the language that I am sure will be convincing to Kerry Packer. It speaks about increased rating shows and an incredible public interest in the older 3-D films. They are scandalous pictures, you have to wear the glasses, and people want to contribute to the trouble to collect them. The *American* found that the FCC did not state about the compatibility problem of viewers without glasses saying that "the fact is the video tape and reference signals were 'normal.' It was up to the local

I don't know if you know much about the experiments in Germany in February last year. It was a Philips broadcast television experiment and they sold somewhere like four million classes

Apparently people were very disappointed: the films were very old and not in color.

I remember the fact that we demonstrated the two lenses we had converted in Channel 9. The chief engineer there was absolutely fascinated. He had the glasses on and all the monitors had 3-D images. He said, "Wow, I know how to make a better film." He was very enthusiastic but after a couple of months he got cold feet and his opinion changed. I can understand why, although I don't accept the logic of it. He was trained on transient perfect pictures with perfect sharpness and skin tones, etc., and suddenly the picture was not as sharp and the perfect color. There was Don Lee standing there and the colors were perfect, but the moment you put your glasses on the colors were reduced. That was what worried them. The engineer said, "But the color is reduced." We said, "Yes it is reduced so about 85 percent but they're almost always disappointed."

Just imagine, for example, you sold this idea to Holden or Ford or Toyota. One of them is bound to pick it up, not because it is new 3-D but because it would make people look more carefully at their car ad than the others. Yet no one has taken it up!

The suggestion has been that it might be used for special events such as the Moomba parade, or parties or variety specials.

Our point is that it is not special. It looks almost perfectly normal until you have the phone on, then it is 3-D. You can follow it equally well if it is simple, cheap and immediately applicable to television. Tomorrow it might be improved, but today it is the most effective television system. It is patented around the world, in the U.S. it is patented in conjunction with Sanyo at Video West Co., [www.sanyo.com/cv302](http://www.sanyo.com/cv302).

You said that the colors were scientifically worked out. How acceptable do you feel the choice is aesthetically?

Some of the colors that they come up with in the U.S. were quite bizarre. One I remember was a greenish, light gray and purple, color, probably aesthetically perfect but objectionable to look through. The color has to be strong enough to disassociate the fringe image but subtle enough to allow the other colors to come through. Mike and I have always had a fight about the glasses. I have always felt that the colors should be heavy because the effort is to good. Mike says there is too much loss of color and make them lighter. So we have a compromise.

Since seeing some of the scenes from "Alya Cadafes", I have been conscious of the limitations of the film with its three distinct places. What happens when, in live action, someone walks toward you and you pull focus with them?

The singing in the background would just get more obvious, but it is not a real problem. One of the things we found out very early was that that the mind of the viewer has to "click" onto the effect. It is an almost instant click. Some people cannot see it at first and suddenly they see it. It's like when you're stuck, then suddenly they see it. Once their minds are conditioned to it, it works every time. You can put a 9.8 mm lens on an Arriflex; there would have to be subjects reaching the lens before there was any out-of-focus fringing — and people feel that they are still seeing depth. One of the basic things is the direct response, which is the reaction of two men who, at a moment's notice,

One on the grips at Riverside was looking at some still photos with the glasses while it was still top secret and he thought it was wonderful! He then looked at the front cover of the telephone book and said, "These glasses are terrific, I can see 3-D here!" He was sure the effect was in the glasses. That is a fringe benefit that works for any system using glasses.

Henry Lipton quotes a figure of between 5 and 8 per cent who either can't see polarized lenses (stereoblind) or experience discomfort. You would have the added red-blue colorblind problem.<sup>1</sup> Do you have many people who are they cannot see the effects

There was some research done in the U.S. to find if there were any viewing problems. I think there was something like one person in 100 who had problems seeing the effect.

If you had control of the application of the system, how would you approach it? Are there improvements that could be made?

Our system might have some further fine-tuning coming from its use and experiments but it would be better, using different roles. I don't think you could take it much further technically, you would have to go to a different system.

I think that lenscuits screens might have some future, especially when they make solid state screens where each dot is in a fixed position. With a lenscuit screen on top of that, nothing can move and you could have television screens without glass.

As far as applications of the system, at some experimental power game we control, I would find the most competitive market and approach the individuals with the proposal of a half-hour show, at the most, or a segment in a show like *The Don Lane Show*. Then I would ask for \$100,000. I would then offer to go 3-D and have a program with some commodities in 3-D. Millions of dollars could be made from that massive viewer involvement. It is perfect for television where the viewers' attention is fragmented; they are up and go to the fridge, and you never have their full attention. In a cinema you might find the limitations of the system more obvious, because people have no way out for a few hours.

I don't really want to make the program, but as a commercial opportunity I can see a vested opportunity. When you ask how much groundswell value there is, I would say none but that it has a perfectly valid commercial use. We are not cheating, there is a valid depth effect. It also works for magazines and printing, as you saw from that early *Australian Playboy* (although there were problems with that), but as time is now because tomorrow it could be old hat. ★

3. Most of the time, after a day in the classroom, I returned the following day with a new challenge. The initial 200-hour class through a year study. I found it difficult to explain to the planning chapters that they couldn't do anything in their work until they had a year of study to go. I found it difficult to explain to the planning chapters that they couldn't do anything in their work until they had a year of study to go. I found it difficult to explain to the planning chapters that they couldn't do anything in their work until they had a year of study to go.

# Alex Stitt

**When 3-D, when your first feature, "Grandel, Grandel, Grandel," was a motivational term?**

We had the option of doing *Grandel* in 3-D. We had just finished the soundtrack when Mike Browning told me about the process he and Volk Moll had invented. I thought he was pulling my leg, but a couple of days later he carried us off to Riverside Studios and showed it all to us on the Moviola.

We thought very seriously about it but decided against using the process because we were so far down the line. To build the equipment would have added about \$300,000 to the budget and, as the budget for *Grandel* was only \$300,000, it meant a lot of extra money. It also meant giving up to rent the plates and so on. We had already raised the money for *Grandel* so we decided to let it go as it was.

From that moment, however, I wanted to use the process in my next film, and so *Abra Cadabra* was written specifically with it in mind. That is why it is called *Abra Cadabra*, we use using the process as a part of the film.

We are doing little bits of new film premieres, and rethinking the process. We are not thinking of it as a "renew" 3-D film but as a series of plates. The analogy is to theatre instead of doing a cross dissolve, as you would in a regular film with one flat plane, you dissolve not only the back plane, but the middle, we can dissolve out a forest and dissolve in to space, with the characters remaining in the foreground doing what they were doing.

We are also using a lot of tricks; for example, curtains that drop down and pull up again. The curtains have funny weird patterns on them and give the film a theatrical, grotesque feeling. We are calling the film "an animated rock panorama." There is a lot of music but it is well known parody rhyme and Christmas story-type music that has been embroidered on, fiddled with and so which new words have been added. It is all recognizable at once.

**When you decided to go to 3-D and multi-plate, what decisions did you have to make about choosing the new equipment? Was it a standard, "off the shelf" purchase?**

It had to be because it takes forever just to get an animation costume off the shelf. We chose the Nelson-Mordell unit because it was available, they had one on the production line of about the right size. The one big feature we needed was that the column that supports the camera be in the back left hand corner instead of the back center. Peter Neilson designed it so that when the table is turned to vertical, it will accommodate long, roll-up films. This is great because normally you roll up the films as far as you can until you hit the column at the back, and then you have to bend them up or cut them off. The corner column suited us because we had to install another column anyway to support the multiple plates that hang up in the air.

We also have an intricate light pattern, because we have to light every plate individually. The sides immediately would have been taken up with lights and we needed the space at the back to hang the plates.



We made some modifications to that unit, mainly because we are shooting in anamorphic, in Panavision. We needed a much larger hole for the back projection in the table; instead of the usual 13 inches (33cm), we wanted a hole that was 18 inches (45cm) across. This meant moving the table design because the rods that hold the windows and controls had to be moved out and changed. All of the focusing system had to be altered. Normally the follow focus system operates on a bellows, so that the lens is moving up or down in relation to the focal plane. However, the Panavision lens has its focusing system within it, so it only moves that much into the lens had to be built.

In the meantime Ian Scott, of Scott Animation in St. Kilda, who builds the devices to animate signs and run ads in showrooms, built everything to Mike Browning's original designs for the plates. This meant a couple of columns so that the plates could be moved vertically, independently of the rest of the gear. Each of the three plates needed a plate to hold the cells that, and movable peg bars so that we could put cells in and out, which is an essential part of the 3-D effect. Being able to put the scene against is one of the things that really give you the effect of depth, so the cells had to be removable. It was a lot of work getting these things done.

**So your work is restricted to these plates...**

It has four planes: the basic camera plane and three up to the sky. We can shoot eight planes without any trouble by introducing the back projection system—that was my contribution to the system. We have a thing called a Zopic screen, invented by Zopic Perini, which is a screen for back projection material and works well optically. We put it in because the four planes were a long way apart. It is about a meter from the table to the

top plane and if you want to go to eight planes you would be up to two meters, which would mean that the camera would be six meters up in the air instead of the four meters it is now. Also, on the bottom plane we work to a drawing 17 inches (43cm) across while the top plane is 7 inches (18cm) across, so you can imagine on eight planes the top one would be as much as half an inch wide (0.5cm). Conversely the bottom one could be five feet (1.52m). Focusing the cells, let alone trying to change them under the camera, would be horrific.

By breaking the system in half we shoot background material which contains animation four plates deep, process it and put it in the background projector, which gives us, in effect, four plates below our base plane.

**How do you control the whole thing so that many plates?**

We have the video frame from our shooting of the original material, which is projected onto the Zopic screen. The only trick is that we make that back projection plane the one in focus, which means that there is no further effect on the image. It works because we can cut across them have back projection and something that is out and so one can detect a difference in quality on a big screen. We are delighted by it all.

The only problem with the Zopic screen is that we have had to shoot at a very slow speed because of the low light level coming through the screen. In fact, we are at about a two second exposure per frame instead of the normal quarter of a second.

**Does the computer save you any time in controlling these plates?**

The computer is essential when you are doing this and you have four planes moving. The camera has to stop and read the first plane across one hundredth of an inch (0.25mm), then the next one and so on, and put all the drawings down and take the picture. However, the computer controls all the plates. While it doesn't make the shooting any faster it minimizes a lot of human error, and from the cameraman to think about the drawings rather than the mechanics. I think it is even more essential for this film because looking at the drawings is hard enough. The operator can be changing cells on all levels because we are doing a lot of atmospheric stuff, such as rain cycles, on all the planes.

**If that is hard for the operator, how do the animators approach the multiple plates?**

Although it certainly is a little bit, all the animators have handled it well, there are a couple of tricks to it. It is difficult to put your mind



Early character designs for Allen Gubler

"The Naughty Song?" We have painted the words "Naughty Song!" on the curtain and where it comes down with a great big bang, the signal is terrific! We have kept version off all the characters but the blue suit is bad. I just made to be creative, it doesn't "believe," so we have said it rudely. But there are lots of them, you don't have to use the same design here.

The animation is available online is actually part of your own style, so you don't find it is restricted?

Not at all. Instead of using every color in the world, stylistically I use a reduced palette. In choosing colors for the characters I select those that work well together, which means staying within a limited range. We designed all the characters, colored them as I thought they should be, that some of them and looked through the plates to see if there was any problem. There were one or two colors that looked a bit odd as we changed them. There was no feeling of restriction.

To what extent have you considered the possibility of the film being viewed in 3-D?

I haven't really considered it at all. It would be like making things for color television and worrying about black and white. We see it in 3-D most of the time on the workprint, you don't bother sitting at the editing bench while wearing glasses, so you watch it as 2-D

material, looking at it that way there are no problems. If there was a scene that didn't work you would consider doing something about it, but as far as it is working fine.

One is immediately aware of the out-of-focus foregrounds, not as much as in animation but as something that is uncomfortable in seeing in hard-edged cartoon animation...

Yes, and it is very interesting that The Secret of NIMH (Don Bluth Productions), while looking like a new Disney film with little animals and things, was shot on a two-plane system. They built the camera around separately, and, judging from the photos in *Animaparc* *Connoisseurs*, it is huge. They built two animation benches and stacked them on top of each other, with plant lights and complete cameras on each, just to get soft focus material. If you have little animated characters sitting on a background, they are always as sharp as the main characters, so you are stuck with that as a style, especially when you cut to close-ups. But if you can throw the background out of focus it looks terrific.

On *Gravelled*, and again on *Allen Gubler*, I have adopted an idea of mine, which is to take all the lines off and leave flat shapes of color. I did it on *Gravelled* purely for stylistic reasons because I hate the backgrounds being painted shapes and all the characters having lines around them. You can

immediately tell which part of the scene is going to move! There are two ways to go: one is to put lines around everything, which is not silly. Disney has been doing that recently in *The Animal Book* and a couple of others.

The other way, also used by Disney, is to paint soft, colored lines around everything; when they want to do the *Nerd* process, which has solid black lines, they begin putting black lines around things in the background.

Although in *Gravelled* the lines were left off for stylistic reasons, in *Allen* hard lines around things would become messy when shown on film. Now, the flat areas of color just become soft at the edges, which looks acceptable. The same thing happens in real films when a dark foreground shows up against a dark background. There are many scenes where you can't see anything, and it looks okay. It has never been done in animation; people draw lines around the shape to make it stand out all the time. It means that in a strange way *Allen* is certainly very close to real cinematographically colored shapes as characters tend to merge with colored shapes on backgrounds, and things in the foreground and background tend to merge out of focus. In that regard it is all getting "real-of," but my drawing style is so stylized it takes the film away from reality; in that way it is ambivalent.

Do you find the creative aspects of the 3-D process attractive enough to consider another 3-D film?

In the case of Allen Gubler, it happens to work with the main elements of the story. One of the things I find limiting is the restriction on the amount of movement of the new camera, which otherwise has the potential to go from a full-wide frame down to a close-up in a split second. With the multiple planes you would go crashing through these elements of glass!

There are many other things that put aesthetic limits on your work with 3-D, but ask me again when we complete this film.

Camera details: The Nelson-Hoadell camera is operated by Jack Caplan and Ken Humphreys. Caplan was a camera operator at Photographic in Sydney and then at Raymond Lee. Although he did not work the Osborn computer stand at Photographic, he has worked in operations with the Nelson-Hoadell operation in much similar to self and program. The programmer of the animation stand computer-control program was Mark Roberts who came out from Canada for the installation with Peter Nelson. He then travelled to Britain where the BBC has recently installed a Nelson-Hoadell computer-controlled stand. ★

attend the change of size and the fact that something is the foreground is drawn smaller than something in the background is possible. It is due to the forced length of the lens we are using and the size of drawings.

I solve most of the problems when I am doing the layouts. I do a basic layout of the scene at the major field size, say 17 inches (43cm) across. I draw all the elements at that size, then put them into the copy camera and make reduction drawings of the appropriate elements. The animator then has a basic layout that shows him how the whole thing looks and a series of separate pieces of paper with items drawn to scale. Once that is provided, it is all clear and understandable. But the tricks start in stepping from one plane to another and having a character move out of frame on one plane and in on another, which happens quite often, certainly test their concentration.

There are the kind of problems to which animators are accustomed anyway. There are many things that only make sense to an animator who is solving the mechanical problems associated with these sorts of tricks.

In live action you can have a person move from background to foreground easily, but in animation you are hindered in a few places. How have you handled these movements?

Originally we thought we could have that kind of movement because the planes are capable of character vertical movement. We can do it if we have just one plane but if we are using all the planes, which we do more often than not, we can't get them close enough because of the lighting and the reflection problems when they get close together. So we have had to abandon that idea.

We get around it using tricks you don't really notice. You can cheat when objects move quickly towards you, because you don't really perceive them in darkness. It takes a while for you to decide where things are and, if they come barling at you, you can't decide anyway. Even the *Comes!* At Va effects depend on the fact that you duck instinctively when something has been thrown towards you, rather than thinking that the object is actually leaving the screen.

How have you handled the limited color palette that the process involves?

The only limitation is that you can't use the precise colors of the glasses. If you see, you see the color but it takes on a certain fluorescence and won't sit in foreground or background. We have actually used the effect early in the film when a big curtain comes down to signal the beginning of

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# 'Snowy River's' got \$18.5 million to say Cinema Papers is wrong

Had it one adds to the Australian record in surprising corollary, that (as far as I am aware) the film has enjoyed nothing like that success in other countries, the puzzle becomes greater. Not only has its overseas performance in no way matched the local success but *The Man From Snowy River* has had nothing like the box-office success of *Gallipoli*, *Breaker Morant* or *My Brilliant Career*.

— JACK CLANCY WRITING  
IN *CINEMA PAPERS* March 1983

"As much as I applaud Jack Clancy's motives in taking a 'Second Glance' at the popular success of *THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER*, a correction of fact is in order. *Snowy River* is enjoying spectacular success overseas.

It is the second of only two Australian films to be considered a hit in the American market (the first was *Road Warrior* — but that didn't rate a mention either). At the time of writing *Snowy River* has grossed \$18.5 million in U.S. and Canadian theatres alone. It has appeared several times on the U.S. top ten weekly grosses list, it is still in the top 30 — the third longest run on the list (after 28 weeks of release). It has played in as many as 700 theatres at any one time. As well, it was nominated by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association for a Golden Globe as best foreign film. And it won for director George Miller the most popular film award at the Montreal World Film Festival.

"With American free and pay TV to come, with the rest of the world about to start, I will go on record as saying that *Snowy River* will gross at least \$35 million overseas".



*Geoff Burdett*  
PRODUCER  
*THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER*

# Film Reviews

## Dusty

## Amend Zeller

**Duty** is something of a surprise as a film. With its spontaneous style, this patchy-paced feature emerges as a significant contribution to the growing number of films that tackle aspects of Australian bushlife. The director, John Richardson, remains faithful to the spirit of the book upon which it is based, and the film should stimulate interest in the work of the novel's author, Frank Dunlop Dawson.

Davies's short stories and novels have been placed in the literary tradition of the work of Henry Lawson. A. B. "Bugs" Patterson and later authors such as Vance Palmer. In this review, Davies can easily be shown to have been influenced by Lawson, and his best works use animals to portray the struggle between destiny and freedom, between conformity and rebellion, and Davies now attracts attention in the next play as the historical background and the characters are more fully animalized. These themes are also applied to humans who are seen as being subject to the same conflicts. In his novel, *Dusty*, Davies touches on other animal themes. The relationship between man and a rook, and in one's nature as

Overwhelmed by deep sympathy for his animal and human characters, He spots a lot of time on the land as a farmer and his works are full of detailed observations about the countryside and its inhabitants. In *Drums*, as in *Man-Skin*, much of the novel's action takes place in the low-level, detected-in-the-act world of surveillance and stonewall duty combined with interest in create vibrant characters. Richardson's key achievement in the film adaptation is to create *Drums* as just such a creature. In doing so, he makes full use of his solid background in a documentary filmmaker and his experience in film as a writer.

The film's prologue condenses Duvall's rich opening chapter, which depicts the making of homesteaded lands and sheep herding, the arrival of a domain named white-hot day and a creature of the wild. The film captures in visual shorthand the scene's primordial quality. The sheep makes her first brief appearance as a creature with bare limbs no so much head, a creature of mystery who, throughout of post-apo, in the narrative states, "wandered without face or restraint over a vast landscape."

The dog's death is killed by a youth who stumbles on her list of pups. The screening pup, at approximately a 100 lbs., is sold to Tom Lincoln (Bill Kerr), a former doctor who now works as a hand band for sheep-farmer Harry Marston (Muel Trewanther). Tom takes the pup into a flea, prison-woman shows him, he is a small of



From London that I saw the old man, and there at a little trial John Richardson & I were

by the farmers in the district. But it soon becomes apparent that County has also retained the hunting instincts of his sheep studies: he becomes a sheep killer, a menace to the local farmers who must now remove him. Tom's great attachment to the dog soon be-

Richard Dadd's "psychosis" is a range of self-destructive traits that the viewer is drawn to understand, and that with varying degrees of themes that are just apparent in the work. Henry Moonson's son Jack (Nick Harbison) is not trapped as a young man in a love for the dead and a desire to be a doctor, but rather in the aspects of life. Although he is intent on the domestic life he is to inherit, he also chooses to live the western and free life. The aspects of being Henry Moonson's "responsible" son reflect a worker, his numerous success in terms of property and family, for him to come eventually an outsider and an example of failure in life. The main reason for this is that the viewer is drawn to understand all the central characters in terms of the surface similarities between father and son, husband and wife (and

A highlight of the film is 1951 Kari's beautifully-controlled portrayal as Tom Lincoln. Kari creates a character of great integrity, whose as the noble language of poetry and mathematics, with a minimum of words, is drawn to him of brute strength, a character who is self-contained, yet clearly with

a great love and knowledge of the Bush, and a woman that he goes into his relationship with Daisy. Rickard also has said that in earlier drafts of the novel, Tom was more virtuous, but by the final draft there is an economy of language as the divorce came to order. "The more we gave him to say for himself, the more we left him." The sparing use of words is also more true to the writing of Dreiser, his characters move in a world of "unneeded feelings, unexpressed emotions and feelings expressed by action rather than words."

After a long career that included vaudeville, comedy, headlining and showbiz, Kerr showed his skills as actor in a very different theater in the opening sequence of *Caligula*. He had a special presence and depth, a man who could convey poverty, despair, desperation and strength of character. As Tiberius Luccius, Kerr means the type of business that was so badly missing in Kirk Douglas's portrayal of Nero in *The Man From Snowy River*. Kerr was a caricature that owed more to Walt Disney than it did to the Assassins.

John Stanton is Rindley Jordan, the professional dog-hunter. Treats another complex character of the Australian bush. Part of Rindley is as wild as the dogs that he tracks and kills. He is of a dying breed in the modern world of technology, a man who is close to the basic primordial reality

where hunter and hunted are locked together in a game of survival. In this sense, perhaps an understanding of the cycle of life and a respect for the quarry be taken out of necessity. In a sense, *Rainy Season* is a younger version of *Tom Lantos*, a novel with a deep knowledge of bushcraft and a feeling for the delicate balance of nature. Again these characteristics are combined with a sensitivity of words.

One interesting tidbit is the development of Bailey's relationship with Clara Mancuso, her early antagonist giving way to a growing affection. There is a hint of deep passion in Bailey's free way, he reports, to his smiling content rather than control and her life of domination and self control. In keeping with the approach of the film this relationship is not so much a physical dance, though suggestiveness rather than intercourse.

One of the film's biggest assets is, as a thought, so Darryl has a knowledge of life in a way that does justice to Davison's account. The theme of the film was specifically prepared for the role for more than 10 months by skilled cinematographer Mary McCusker. He was developed as a working dog - he actually was one of the sheep trials in which he participated - and was allowed to finish a very appropriate time a tendency to being down sheep. Richardson used his knowledge of documentary filmmaking to create substance, some of the dogs were











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## FOCAL PRESS





## Gemma Clifford

Continued from p. 129

writer. He wasn't exactly filled with humanity.

The scene where he first meets Frances, on her dressing room, is shot using cuts to her reflection in the mirror, suggesting that he is talking to her reflection . . .

Yes, he was and she was talking to his. I felt that they were confronting one another indirectly. From the minute these two people see one another, there was an instant attraction, an electricity jumping between them. It seemed logical that Frances would talk to him in the mirror because it put that much more distance between them. Then, when she looked at him directly, there was change.

It seemed that he was relating to Frances Farmer the film star whose name could bring big audiences to his play . . .

No, I think Odeis was more concerned with putting her on, he wanted to get a rise out of her. He dropped these things to make her react. It goes back to what I said about proving people to make them react. The most honest reaction you will get out of someone is when you get them unexpectedly. He was sitting on the couch,

testing her, and she was allowing herself to be tested. But she also wants it crossed and childrens him. I saw it as a little duel between them. I wanted to indicate to the audience that there was an immediate attraction and complex tension.

You also get a very strong element of competition between Frances and her mother, Lillian . . .

Yes, that was the major competition in her life. That again brings up the scenes that were taken out. There was more use of the scrapbook, which you now only see once in the film: you don't see Lillian thumbing through this book of all those pictures that she held so dear, images of herself juxtaposed with Frances on the opposite page.

Why did you depict Lillian as the monster of the film?

That is a bit unfortunate because I don't think she was a monster. In the scenes that I removed, she showed great compassion towards Frances and it made for a much better balanced relationship. It made it a little more understandable as to why Frances kept coming back home.

You construct the home at the beginning as a shining letter box, a

well-kept house that is all close and nice. There is a wonderful daughter and it looks like the ideal nuclear family. When you see the house at the end, it has fallen apart, and the letter box is rusty. The whole ideal has gone into decay. Do you see that as a parallel to Frances' deterioration?

I was trying to indicate that Frances was in fact keeping the mother and the father together. Once she left, there was no family, no home. There was no reason to keep up the house and it just disintegrated along with her.

The controls in weather conditions, particularly the use of rain and snow, also seem to reflect Frances' deterioration . . .

Yes. It comes back to the elements, which have a great effect on me and I know they had a great effect on Frances. One of the first things I discussed with Leslie Kovacs was the weather. Unfortunately, it didn't rain in Seattle as much as I wanted it to, and I had to use old techniques. I wanted to contrast the rain of Seattle with the caustic sun of Hollywood.

The sun in California has an effect on you. You get very depressed. That's all this rain, sun, rain, sun — everything is perfect every day. You just wait for something to go wrong, so that you

could appreciate the good times. You live in personal sadness for six months and you get bored with it.

After the film's depiction of the conditions in the asylum, the disintegration at the end seems ironic . . .

I am glad you used that word: that's exactly the way I wanted it to appear: ironic. The reason I produced the disintegration with my own disclaimer was because I don't believe it. We were forced to put it there in return for the use of certain facilities. The producers agreed to the disclaimer and I was hoping to imply that I didn't.

After the obvious commitment you have had to this film, what do you do next?

It is very difficult for me to find something that I feel as passionate about. Before Frances, I was very keen on making the story of Boris and Wlad. I have just to reinstate my enthusiasm for it. There are other stories I am interested in making. James and I are going to make the story of Arnold Eisenstein, sometime in the future, and there is another book called *Our of Africa* that I am very interested in. I am also very interested in Charlie Chaplin, another outstanding person whose life story has fascinated me since I could read. I am talking to a producer about that.

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# Picture Preview

## Molly

*A contemporary fairy tale about Maxie, an 11-year-old girl, who befriends Molly, a dog that sings.*

*Molly is directed by Ned Lander, from a screenplay by Philip Rugeley and Mark Thomas, for producer Henry Levinson. Director of photography is Vance Maurion.*



*Opposite top: Maxie (Claudia Kiriakou) waits for her friend Molly. Opposite bottom: Maxie is drawn to the mysterious behavior of a strange man. (Gary McInnis) Right: The last thing Maxie and Molly see as they race. Below: Maxie is comforted by the reappearance of Molly.*





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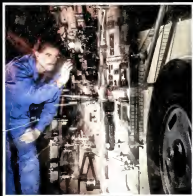


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